



# CAREER PLANNING GUIDE

- › Academic & Career Planning Services
- › School of Business Career Success Center
- › School of Education Placement Services
- › School of Law Career Services



UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH DAKOTA

# Career Services at USD

Stay updated on new jobs and internships.  
Sign up for our newsletter by emailing  
[kasandra.girard@usd.edu](mailto:kasandra.girard@usd.edu)

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## Academic & Career Planning Center

Academic Commons,  
1st Floor I.D. Weeks Library  
605-677-5381  
[advising@usd.edu](mailto:advising@usd.edu)  
[www.usd.edu/advising](http://www.usd.edu/advising)



Academic &  
Career Planning  
Center at USD



@USDAdvising



howimetyouemployer.  
blogspot.com



The University of  
South Dakota  
Career Services Page

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## School of Business Career Success Center

Beacom School of Business,  
Room 103  
605-677-5201  
[BeacomCSC@usd.edu](mailto:BeacomCSC@usd.edu)  
[www.usd.edu/business/  
career-success-center](http://www.usd.edu/business/career-success-center)



USD Beacom School  
of Business – Career  
Success Center



@BeacomCSC



The University of  
South Dakota Beacom  
School of Business

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## School of Education Student & Placement Services

Delzell School of Education,  
Room 113  
605-677-5611  
[ed@usd.edu](mailto:ed@usd.edu)  
[www.usd.edu/education/  
career-resources](http://www.usd.edu/education/career-resources)



USD School  
of Education

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## School of Law Professional and Career Development

School of Law, Room 109  
605-677-3909  
[law@usd.edu](mailto:law@usd.edu)  
[www.usd.edu/law/  
career-services](http://www.usd.edu/law/career-services)



USD School  
of Law





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# **Get to Know Career Services at USD**

# OFFICES & STAFF

## ACADEMIC & CAREER PLANNING CENTER

First floor, I.D. Weeks Library

The Academic & Career Planning Center is designed with your long-term success in mind. Our advisors coach you through your major and career plans so that you graduate from USD well-prepared for the world. We can assist you with academic scheduling, developing your academic skills, tutoring and study resources, major exploration, securing internships and employment opportunities, promoting your skills and abilities in resumes and cover letters, practicing job interviews, and connecting you with potential employers.

## BEACOM SCHOOL OF BUSINESS CAREER SUCCESS CENTER

Beacom Room 103

We assist business majors with resume development and critique, practice interviews, development and execution of job search strategies, and connecting you with employers.

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION PLACEMENT SERVICES

Delzell Room 113

The Placement & Certification Office will assist you with information, suggestions and tips on how to begin your job search. Our services are available to recent graduates, as well as alumni.

## SCHOOL OF LAW CAREER SERVICES

Law School Room 109

Presentations, workshops, symposiums and hands on experiences coupled with one on one career counseling provide a full complement of opportunities for you to explore, grow and learn. Our mission in career services is to assist you in discovering the array of opportunities you may not have even known to dream about! Myriad opportunities through internships, externships and pro bono opportunities abound. Utilize the talents, strengths and abilities you brought to law school while honing and expanding newly acquired ones.

# CAREER PLANNING SERVICES

- **Self Exploration:** Evaluate your interests, skills, values, and personality traits through various career inventories.
- **Establish Career Goals:** Set up an individual appointment with an advisor to discuss choosing a major and developing a career action plan.
- **Job Search Process:** Learn job search strategies and identify possible positions and where to find them.
- **Resume/Cover Letter Writing:** Have your resume or cover letter critiqued.
- **Interviewing Skills:** Learn how to interview like a pro; practice your skills during a mock interview.
- **Internships:** Seek internships through on-campus recruiting and our online job/internship database Coyote Careers.
- **Skill-building Workshops:** Attend programs on resume writing, job searching, interviewing, and internships.
- **Career and Graduate School Fairs:** Network with recruiters and learn about numerous opportunities.
- **On-Campus Interviews:** Interview on campus with employers for full-time jobs and internships.
- **Networking Events:** Connect with alumni and employers for career information and advice.
- **Graduate School Application Process:** Receive assistance with your graduate or professional school application.
- **Course Offerings:** Receive credit for exploring your career options, learning job search strategies, or for doing an internship.
  - › A&S 101: Career Exploration
  - › A&S 301: Job Searching in the 21st Century
  - › A&S 494: Internship (or through your academic department)
- **Websites:** Utilize our online resources through the student portal.
  - › Coyote Careers: job/internship database
  - › Self assessment career planning software
- **Newsletters:** The Hired Coyote
  - › The Hired Coyote Career Services Weekly Update
  - › Biz Bulletin (business majors)





# Explore Your Options

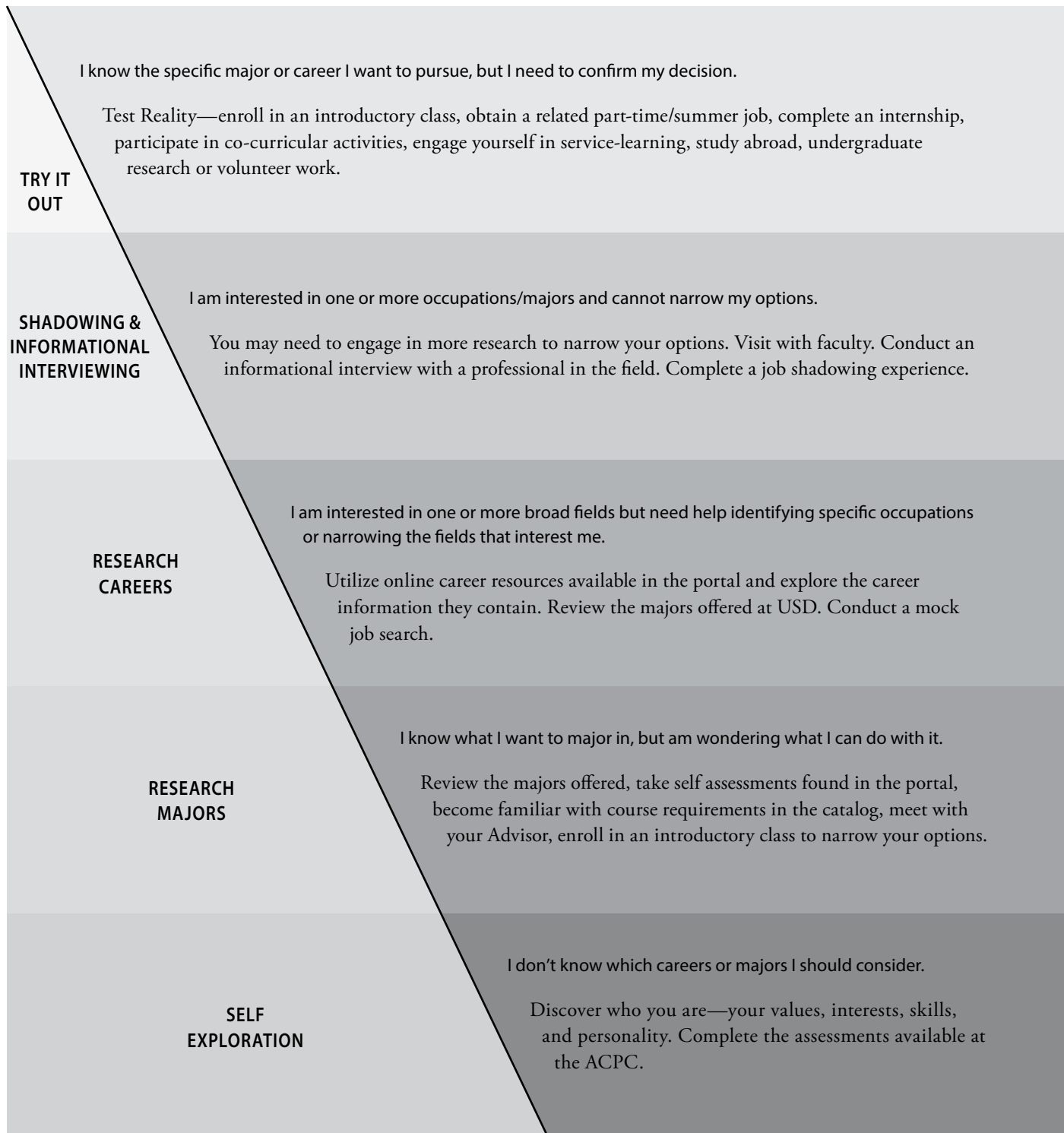
# COMMON MYTHS

## About Career Decision Making

Myths	Facts
Selecting a major and a career is the same thing.	In most cases, there is not one specific major required to enter a career field. Many majors relate to numerous careers.
Graduate schools require specific undergraduate majors.	The majority of programs do not require a specific degree or major for admission to graduate or professional school.
Everyone else knows their major.	Nationally, 3/4 of students express some uncertainty about their major and as many as 60% of students change it.
There is a quick and easy method for choosing a career.	Career decision making is a process, not a one-time event. It takes time, energy, and research.
There is a test that can tell me what I should be.	You are far too complex, and the world of work is far too varied and ever changing, for any one test to tell you what career you "should" pursue.
There is one perfect major for me.	You have many interests and abilities. Consequently, you would enjoy a number of careers.
Certain degrees make a student unemployable.	Any graduate of USD will come away with a liberal arts education, which makes one marketable because the skills developed are highly valued by employers.
Choosing one major means giving up all others.	Your degree opens the door to numerous opportunities. There are also a variety of ways for you to combine your interests in more than one major or career.
The job market should dictate the career I choose.	The job market is difficult to predict and may be different by the time you graduate, so this should not be your only consideration.
I should love every aspect of a major or career that I choose.	Rarely does this happen. Don't be deterred. Instead, focus on options that give you satisfaction 80% of the time.



# THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



# ACADEMIC & CAREER PLANNING GUIDE

YEAR	CAREER PLANNING ACTIVITIES	ACADEMIC & OTHER ACTIVITIES
<b>Freshman</b> (FOUNDATIONS)	Meet with your Advisor to explore or confirm your academic and career goals. Improve your understanding of your skills, values and interests.	Meet with your Advisor and develop your plan of study. Select courses to help you explore majors and careers.
	Identify majors or careers through workshops and vocational assessments.	Visit the myU portal and review the University Catalog online.
	Attend job fairs to familiarize yourself with the requirements of your field.	Establish a strong GPA and build relationships with faculty.
	Talk with professionals to gain firsthand information about careers. Arrange an informational interview or job shadowing experience.	Utilize tutoring services and develop time management skills.
	Begin to build your resume. Obtain a part-time or summer job.	Participate in service learning, student organizations, or volunteer work.
	Review which classes are most interesting to you and which majors are available at USD.	Enroll in a First Year Experience seminar.
	Register with Coyote Careers and sign up for the Career Services' weekly update.	
<b>Sophomore</b> (INVESTIGATIONS)	If you have not done so already, complete a career assessment. Relate your values, interests and skills to possible careers.	Pursue leadership opportunities in student organizations (e.g., Vice President, Community Advisor, etc).
	Obtain career-related work experience such as a part-time job or summer employment.	Meet with faculty Advisor in your major.
	Develop a list of possible internship opportunities.	Consider Study Abroad opportunities.
	Explore majors and career options with our staff.	Visit the Center for Academic and Global Engagement and Student Services.
	Job shadow or speak with professionals in careers that interest you.	
	Conduct a mock professional job search to identify employers' needs.	
	Attend job fairs and other career related workshops.	
<b>Junior</b> (EXPERTISE)	If you have not already done so, register with Coyote Careers and sign up for the Career Services' weekly newsletter.	
	Update resume and narrow list of internship opportunities; secure an internship during school year or summer.	Choose elective courses to enhance your skills and increase your marketability.
	Discuss career opportunities in your major with your Advisor, faculty members and other professionals.	Investigate the role of graduate school in your plans. Begin planning for your graduate school applications. Complete entrance tests.
	Attend job fairs to discuss career opportunities and develop a career network.	Join the professional associations in your career field.
	Attend interviewing and job search workshops.	Pursue research opportunities or creative projects. Visit the Center for Academic and Global Engagement or Student Services.
	Have your resume critiqued.	
	Participate in mock interviews.	
<b>Senior</b> (INTEGRATIONS)	If you have not already done so, register with Coyote Careers and sign up for the Career Services' weekly update.	
	Meet with your Career Advisor to develop your interview skills, target your job search, critique your resume and cover letter, and/or review your graduate school application.	Request a senior audit from the Registrar's office and review it with your Advisor.
	Compile your contacts from internship and other work experience into a network of people to serve as references and Advisors for your job search.	Apply for graduation.
	Participate in a mock interview.	Continue the graduate school application process.
	Enroll in A & S 301: Job Searching in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century and attend job search events. View our events calendar for more information	Continue to participate in professional organizations. Explore opportunities at the Student Services and Center for Academic and Global Engagement.
	If you have not already done so, register with Coyote Careers and sign up for the Career Services' weekly update..	Conduct Financial Aid Exit Interviews if necessary.
	Participate in on-campus interviews.	Depending on your major, you may need to develop your portfolio or credential file.
	Attend job fairs, networking events, and other career related events.	Identify your references and inform them of your career objectives. Update them regularly.

# UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF

Self assessment is a process by which you learn more about yourself and what you like, what you don't like, and how you react in certain situations. Knowing these things can help you determine which occupations and work situations might be a better fit for you.

## Career Assessments

### SELF ASSESSMENTS

The Academic and Career Planning Center has available an online career planning tool that will assist you to select a major and career congruent with your interests, values, skills and personality (find it in the student portal).

### MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR (MBTI)

Designed to help you identify your natural personality preferences and provides insight into qualities such as how you make decisions, interact with other people, gather information, and get energized. Helps you to better understand yourself and your motivations, strengths, and areas for further development. (*Take at the ACPC*)

### STRONG INTEREST INVENTORY (SII)

An assessment that can help students discover their interests, preferences, and personal style. It identifies themes and specific areas of interest, and it compares your interests with those of individuals in a variety of occupations. It can help you identify new options to investigate further. (*Take at the ACPC*)

## Things to Consider

### What are your interests?

- Which classes have you taken that you enjoy? Do other classes sound interesting?
- What do you enjoy doing outside of class? What do you like to read or watch?
- Do you prefer to spend your time alone or with others?
- What population do you want to work with? Adults? Children? The elderly? Those with special needs?

### What are your abilities?

- What skills do you want to use on the job?
- Which classes have you performed well in?
- Have you won any honors or awards in particular areas?
- Do you have a special aptitude for working with people, children, animals, data, or solving problems?

### What are your values?

- How much responsibility are you prepared to accept? Do you want to be responsible for the work of others?
- Are you more comfortable with close supervision?
- Do you like having the option of prioritizing your own work?
- Do you prefer to work independently or as part of a team?
- What hours do you want to work? Are you a 9-to-5er? Do you need a part-time or flexible schedule? What about working weekends?
- How much money do you want/need to make? Are benefits important to you (vacation leave, holiday pay, medical benefits, retirement)?
- What values or ideals would you like to further in the work that you do (cleaning up the environment, making money, helping others, etc.)?

### What type of person are you?

- What type of people do you want to work with? Strong, assertive individuals? Creative types?
- What type of atmosphere do you function best in? Relaxed, easy-going? Fast-paced, goal-oriented?
- Do you prefer a structured workday or are you pretty flexible?
- What type of environment do you want to work in? Do you like quiet? Do you want to be near a window?

### What are the realities?

- Are you able to handle the rigors of a particular major?
- Are you going to be able to meet the requirements in a reasonable amount of time?
- What does the job market look like in that area?
- Are outside pressures (family, peers) shaping and influencing your decision?



# CONDUCTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

An informational interview is a visit with a professional in a field of interest to you. The goal of the informational interview is to network, gain first-hand information on the industry, and to obtain valuable career planning advice that helps you increase your qualifications or credentials.

## Arranging Your Visit

Begin by locating someone who is working in an occupation you are considering or a faculty member who teaches in a major you are considering. When you contact the individual, be enthusiastic. Identify yourself and state your purpose. Emphasize that you are seeking career information. Determine the time and place of the appointment. If you don't know where to start, visit with a Career Counselor to see if there are employers that already work with USD students.

### A PHONE CALL CONVERSATION MAY TRANSPIRE LIKE THIS

*Hello, Mr. Jones, I am Diane Smith from The University of South Dakota. I'm conducting some research on entrepreneurship to confirm my career goals. Dr. John Doe, my advisor, suggested that I stop by your store to ask you a few questions. I'd appreciate about 15 to 20 minutes of your time. Is this something you would be interested in? Does this Thursday at 2 p.m. work for you?*

### AN EXAMPLE OF VIRTUAL CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWS

TO: anitainterview@hotmail.com  
SUBJECT: Invitation to Meet with a Student

Greetings Ms. Interview:

I am writing to inquire about scheduling an informational interview with you. I am presently a student at the University of South Dakota and am considering Clinical Social Work as a career. I am from the Omaha area and am interested in learning more about what professionals in the field like most about their work, what they find challenging, and what advice they would have for me. This information is helpful as I explore careers and establish professional goals. I located your professional profile on your website and am wondering if you are available for twenty minutes during the week of September 5th. I know that the life of a Therapist is busy. If you are unavailable, please let me know and I will identify alternative arrangements. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

<name>

## Prior to your Visit

Learn as much about the organization and field as you can. Remember that you will be visiting with busy people who have many demands on their time. Researching the field before your visit can help you identify the best questions to ask during your brief time together. It also communicates a high level of professionalism and competency.

Before the interview, send an email or note confirming the time and place. Research parking and driving directions so you are on time for the appointment. Dress professionally for the appointment, as you are networking with an individual in your field.

Make a list of questions that you think would affect whether or not you would choose that occupation or major. A list of sample questions is provided on the next page.

# CONDUCTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

## Sample Questions

- What sets your company apart or distinguishes it from others in the same industry?
- Why did you decide to work in this field?
- What major did you choose in college?  
Which college majors are represented in this profession?
- What courses have been the most useful in your career?
- What surprised you about your profession when you started?
- What is the traditional career path for this field?
- What are the main responsibilities of your job?  
What is a typical day like for you?
- What do you like most about your current position?
- What do you find challenging about your current position?
- What personal qualities do you feel are most important in your work?
- What types of stress do you experience on the job?
- What opportunities are there for advancement in this field?
- What kind of work schedule does this career require?  
Do you work overtime, part-time, on-call?
- What should I expect when looking for my first job in this field?
- What combination of skills and abilities would be valuable in this career?
- What activities should I pursue to build my resume?
- Do you know of other people who may be interested in assisting my research into this field?

## During the Interview

Greet the individual by their surname. Reiterate the purpose of the interview and share a little information about yourself. Remember to watch your clock and adhere to the time commitments that you communicated in your initial correspondence with the individual. Conclude the interview by asking if there is any other information they would like to share. Thank them for their time and assistance.

## Following-up on the Interview

Once the interview is finished, write or email a personal thank you note to the interviewee. Reiterate your appreciation of their time and the important information that you gathered. If you are interested in maintaining the relationship, communicate this.

### INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP EXAMPLE

January 1, 2012

Ms. Shirley B Interview  
105 Spirit Road  
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Dear Ms. Interview:

Thank you for making time in your schedule to meet with me regarding my interest in the XYZ Seed Company. The information you shared helped to broaden my understanding of the domestic market.

Our conversation about erosion and organic means of weed control was of particular interest to me. Further, I appreciated your suggestion that I look into a subscription of Farm Implement Weekly. As a result of our meeting, I will be enrolling in Biology 425: Organic-Based Agricultural & Horticultural Practices. I look forward to learning more about the new twists to methods of weed and pest control.

Thank you again for meeting with me.

Sincerely,  
*Sally Student*  
Sally Student

# WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MAJOR & CAREER?



Some students arrive at USD with a specific major in mind while other students arrive open to many different possibilities. Choosing a major can be a difficult decision, and students often wonder what the connection is between majors and careers. While it is true that for some careers, a specific major is required; that is not the case for the majority of occupations. Many people

select jobs and have occupations that have no direct correlation to their college major. Rest assured that your major selection does not lock you into one career choice.

The University of South Dakota is a liberal arts institution, meaning that students graduating with any major will have been exposed to a broad range of topics that will prepare you to enter any number of careers. The skills that are most desired by employers (regardless of career field) are those skills that all University of South Dakota graduates obtain. No matter which major you choose, you will be qualified to do many things and will develop many skills that are desired by employers. Choosing one major over another will not necessarily limit your career options. In addition, most graduate and professional programs do not require a specific undergraduate major. It's more important to select a major that you will enjoy and supplement it with extracurricular experiences such as student activities, internships or part-time/summer jobs, volunteerism or service learning, leadership opportunities, global learning, and research.



## Top 10 Qualities Employers Seek in Job Candidates

ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
 TEAMWORK  
 PROBLEM - SOLVING  
 TECHNICAL SKILLS  
 LEADERSHIP  
 ANALYTICAL SKILLS  
 STRONG WORK ETHIC  
 COMPUTER PROFICIENCY  
 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
 INITIATIVE

Source: Job Outlook,  
 National Association of Colleges & Employers





**Get Some  
Experience**



# THE LOW-DOWN ON INTERNSHIPS

## WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

An internship is a monitored work or volunteer experience where an individual has intentional learning goals and objectives throughout the experience. It serves as a “bridge” between the classroom and work world, where a student is assigned professional and/or pre-professional tasks and responsibilities.



## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A JOB AND AN INTERNSHIP?

A job is generally a paid work experience. Often when individuals are hired for a job, the employer expects the individual to have most of the job skills needed in performing the duties of that position. In a typical entry-level job, an employee receives training to perform the tasks necessary for the position, and then the employee is expected to carry out the duties as assigned, preferably with little supervision. In an internship, the student brings learning objectives that support the student and University’s academic and career goals. An internship is designed to connect on-site experience to the student’s academic training.



## HOW DO I ARRANGE ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR AN INTERNSHIP?

Academic credit may become a component of an internship, but this will be arranged by the student and USD faculty. While employers may call a position an internship, only USD faculty or staff can determine if it is a credit-bearing experience. This agreement must be created before the experience. If a student is unable to obtain credit for the internship through their department, they may still be able to get credit for the internship through the Academic and Career Planning Center.



## HOW MANY HOURS A WEEK IS AN INTERNSHIP?

Work schedules may vary and tend to be flexible, depending on the needs of the employer and student. Typically, students work ten to twenty hours per week during the academic year. Some may work full-time if the internship is completed during the summer. If the internship is offered for academic credit, then each academic area has prescribed contact hours each student must meet in order to receive credit. Hours for an internship may also be determined by an employer depending on the project(s) and duties of the intern.

## WHAT IS APPROPRIATE COMPENSATION?

Compensation varies widely and is dependent on the organization’s needs, budget and position description.

# REASONS TO COMPLETE AN INTERNSHIP

## 1. EMPLOYERS INCREASINGLY WANT TO SEE EXPERIENCE IN THE NEW COLLEGE GRADS THEY HIRE.

According to a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 95% of employers said candidate experience is a factor in hiring decisions. Employers expect that new grads will have gained experience through internships. If you have completed internships, you will clearly have an edge over your classmates who haven't.

## 2. EMPLOYERS SEE THEIR INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS AS THE BEST PATH FOR HIRING ENTRY-LEVEL CANDIDATES.

An internship can be an avenue to a job. Many employers prefer to hire from their internship programs and an internship gives you the chance to show an organization the strong skills that you have to offer as a future employee.

## 3. YOU MAY GET PAID MORE WHEN YOU GRADUATE IF YOU'VE DONE ONE OR MORE INTERNSHIPS.

New employees with experience (including internship experience) generally receive higher starting salaries. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, organizations report that new hires with internship experience were paid 6.5% more than those without the experience.

## 4. YOU COULD EARN COLLEGE CREDIT TOWARD YOUR DEGREE.

Credit for your internship may be available through your major department or through the Academic and Career Planning Center.

## 5. INTERNSHIPS ENABLE YOU TO GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR FIELD AND TEST OUT YOUR CAREER.

You might discover by interning in your planned career field that it's not what you thought it would be like, or that a particular area within your career field is a better fit than others. It's better to learn this information before you graduate and start job searching. Also, you will gain valuable insight into your career field and be able to enhance your skills.

## 6. YOU'LL BE ABLE TO APPLY YOUR ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE TO YOUR CAREER FIELD.

You have been learning the most updated information about your career field in your classes and now is your chance to put that knowledge to work and contribute to your profession prior to graduating.

## 7. YOU'LL GAIN CONFIDENCE.

If you're afraid of facing the work world when you graduate, an internship will teach you that you can do it and give you a better understanding of what to expect.

## 8. YOU'LL BUILD YOUR NETWORK.

Everyone you meet in an internship is a potential contact for your network and someone you can call upon for advice and referrals when you are job-hunting closer to graduation time.

## 9. YOU WILL BUILD YOUR RESUME.

Internships=Work Experience and employers love to see them on a resume! Any kind of experience on your resume is helpful, but career-relevant internship experience will make a better impression on employers than your serving job at Applebee's.

## 10. YOU MIGHT MAKE MONEY.

Not all internships are paid, of course, but those that do pay can yield pretty decent salaries. Employers queried in NACE's Experiential Education Survey reported offering their undergraduate interns an average of \$16.33 per hour.



# HOW TO FIND AN INTERNSHIP

Internships are a great way to explore fields of interest to you and further develop relevant skills that will aid you in your future job search. Internships provide a link between the academic and professional environment and are meant to be a learning experience.

By the time you graduate from USD, ideally you will have completed one or more internships. Depending on your career goals, your internship experiences may vary, but each one should help you broaden your knowledge base and help shape your future goals.

- Meet with someone from career services to explore internships of interest.
- Register for Coyote Careers & complete your profile to view potential internship opportunities and have new ones emailed to you.
- Check out [www.youtern.com](http://www.youtern.com), a site that posts internships from employers throughout the U.S. and abroad.
- Write or update your resume and cover letter and have them critiqued.
- Attend career related workshops and employer events such as on-campus interviews.
- Attend the USD Career Fair in October to learn about internship openings.
- Practice and improve your interviewing skills through a mock interview.
- Attend one of USD's Networking Events to meet company recruiters and alumni.
- Research industries and employers.
- Network with everyone you know.
- Check with professors in your major department for possible job and internship leads.

# WORKING YOUR INTERNSHIP

Beginning a new internship can be exciting as well as intimidating. One of the biggest perks of an internship is that it can lead to future employment opportunities. Follow these steps to make the most of your internship experience.

## APPROACH YOUR INTERNSHIP LIKE IT'S A PERMANENT, PROFESSIONAL JOB.

Build your professional reputation. Demonstrate initiative and take your work tasks very seriously.

## TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN FROM THE EXPERIENCE.

Set goals at the beginning of the experience that focus on ways you can expand your skills and experience. Don't be afraid to ask questions. An internship is a learning experience; you are not expected to know everything.

## BECOME A TEAM PLAYER.

In today's work environment, individual successes don't mean much unless the team is also successful. Figure out how you fit into the grand scheme of things.

## HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.

Assume that everyone else knows more than you do, but also don't be afraid to express your ideas. However, make sure you are not coming off as cocky or a know-it-all.

## BUILD RELATIONSHIPS NOW.

Discover ways to become a strong contributing member of the team so that you can continue to network and expand your professional connections within the field.

## DEVELOP A STRONG WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR.

Ask questions to assess your progress and be open to feedback.

## HAVE FUN.

Work hard but also make sure you enjoy the experience.

## REFLECT.

After you have completed your internship, reflect on the opportunity and consider what you have learned about yourself and about the field.



# **Plan Your Internship or Job Search Strategy**

# JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

- **Help Wanted Ads**

- › Covers less than 10% of openings
- › Newspapers—Sunday editions tend to have the largest number of listings
- › Professional and Association Newsletters
- › Trade Journals or Magazines

- **Career Centers**

- › Can assist you in all areas of your job search (ie: resume writing, interviewing skills, job search databases)
- › On-campus recruiting

- **State Job Service**

- › Most states have professional placement offices for state employment
- › Only list state jobs  
ie: <http://bop.sd.gov/workforum>

- **Electronic Job Search**

- › Internet Resume Databases (ie: Coyote Careers, Career Builder)
- › Company Websites
- › Industry/Professional Association Websites
- › Newspaper Websites
- › Networking Websites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter

- **Networking & Informational Interviewing**

- › Considered to be the most successful job search strategy.
- › Taps into the “hidden” job market
- › Informational Interviewing/Job Shadowing

- **Door to Door/Cold Calling**

- › Dropping off resumes
- › Calling organizations
- › Submitting resumes via email

- **Placement Agencies**

- › Some agencies focus on specific geographic areas, industries, or experience
- › Be open to working temporary jobs
- › Provides you with a proven work record and can fill in gaps in work history
- › Consider only employment agencies where the employer pays the fee

- **Career Fairs**

- › Offer another way to network
- › Come prepared and dressed professionally
- › May get an interview on the spot

- **Internships/Volunteering**

- › Another way to network
- › Work experience
- › A way to prove yourself to the employer
- › Looks great on a resume

- **Additional Strategies**

- › Look for growth companies that are continually expanding and hiring
- › Pay attention to stories or announcements about managers who got promoted or hired
- › Join professional organizations
- › Part-time jobs in industry
- › Temping



# JOB SEARCH WEBSITES

Many job openings are now posted on the internet. While this is not an extensive list of sites, it does include many very useful places to focus your search. Your job search may also necessitate identifying unique sites that find jobs or internships specific to your major or applying directly to company and organization websites.

**Coyote Careers** ..... <http://www.usd.edu/coyotecareers>

The site hosts job and internship openings from employers looking to hire USD students and alumni. It's also where work-study and local/regional part-time job opportunities are posted. Search by keywords, upload resume, apply online, and access on campus interview schedules.

**South Dakota Dept. of Labor** ..... <http://dol.sd.gov/>

The SD Dept of Labor serves the entire state. The site will allow you to search for jobs by city, county, job type, keywords, etc.

**South Dakota Bureau of Personnel** ..... <http://bop.sd.gov/>

Postings for job openings in state government of South Dakota, wide variety of jobs in administration, human services, law enforcement, corrections and others.

**50 State Jobs** ..... <http://www.50statejobs.com/>

The site has connections for state government job sites in all states. It also includes links to major cities or counties within each state. This site can help you connect to "departments of labor" in other states.

**Indeed.com** ..... <http://www.indeed.com>

The Indeed search engine pulls job openings from other sites on the internet. Application is made through the actual company website.

**KELO Employment** ..... <http://KELOlandemployment.com>

This site is on the KELO TV web page and is popular with Sioux Falls and regional employers.

**CareerBuilder** ..... [www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)

A nationwide site, often affiliated with newspaper classifieds. Search jobs, post resume, apply online.

**USA Jobs** ..... <http://www.usajobs.gov/>

Gateway for much of the employment with federal government. You can search jobs by type, by organization, by geographic area. You can build a resume and save it to the site and apply for jobs directly from the site.

**YouTern** ..... <http://www.youtern.com>

This site posts internships from employers throughout the nation and abroad.

**Idealist** ..... <http://www.idealists.com>

Jobs in the non-profit sector.

**College Recruiter** ..... <http://www.collegerecruiter.com>

Postings for entry-level jobs and internships.

**LinkedIn** ..... <http://www.linkedin.com>

Not only does this site provide you with a professional profile to use for networking, but you can also search for job openings and be recruited through this site.

# COYOTE CAREERS

Coyote Careers is an online resource housing hundreds of internship and job opportunities. Some of the features include:

- Review and save job and internship postings
- Upload resumes and other career documents
- Access the Employer Contact Database
- Apply for positions
- Sign up for on-campus interviews

## ACCESSING COYOTE CAREERS

**STUDENTS:** All current students have an established account in Coyote Careers, which you can log into via the myU portal at [my.usd.edu](http://my.usd.edu). Once you have logged into the portal, simply click the “Coyote Careers” logo under in the ‘Single Sign On’ box on your homepage.

**ALUMNI:** Go to [www.usd.edu/coyotecareers](http://www.usd.edu/coyotecareers) and click on the Alumni link. Click on **Sign Up** to set up your account. Complete the registration form and click **Submit**. After submitting your registration, check your email—you should have received a Coyote Careers Email Verification message from the system. Follow the instructions in the email to confirm your account. Note—if you haven’t received the email, check your junk mail folder.

Once you have confirmed your account, your registration will be approved by our office, generally within one business day. Once approved, you will receive an email with your username and a link to set up your password. That link will expire within 24 hours. After setting up your password, you will automatically be logged into Coyote Careers and can begin using the system.

The first thing you will want to do once you gain access to Coyote Careers is to set up your profile by clicking on the Profile tab. Some of the information will be pre-populated. After completing your profile, you will be able to apply for open positions, set up email notifications for when new positions are posted, and register for events. The system reviews your profile to recommend jobs matching your qualifications. The more complete your profile is, the better your job alerts will be. Employers are able to review your resume and contact you through the network if you choose to include your resume in the resume books. Now you are ready to begin using Coyote Careers!

## YOUR HOME PAGE

Your home page is where you will read current announcements from us and access your quick links. From the home page you can access tabs that will allow you to quickly and easily navigate the Coyote Career system.

## PROFILE TAB

This tab allows you to edit your personal and academic profile, as well as your privacy and notification settings.

## DOCUMENTS

This tab is where you will upload your resume if you’d like employers to be able to view it or if you want to be included in resume collections that occur through the year.

## JOBS

Where you will be able to search and apply for jobs.

## EVENTS

This tab will allow you to learn about and register for upcoming career fairs, workshops, and information sessions.

## INTERVIEWS

Use this tab to sign up for on-campus interviews with companies.

## EMPLOYERS

This tab will allow you to access a huge database of companies and recruiter contact information.

## RESOURCES

The Resources tab will take you to additional resources within the system, such as an interest assessment, career information, and handouts.

## CALENDAR

Keep track of upcoming career events here.

## COMPLETING YOUR PROFILE

The first thing you should do after logging into your Coyote Careers account is to set up your **Profile**. Do this by clicking on the Profile tab. Some of the information for your Profile will be pre-populated. Complete the rest of your Personal Profile and then click on **Save Changes** to move to the Academic Profile to enter your degree information and geographic preferences.

## UPLOADING DOCUMENTS

Next you will want to begin uploading documents into Coyote Careers, such as resumes, cover letters, transcripts, etc. To do so, click on the **Documents** tab and **Approved**, then click **Add New**.

Give your document a label, then browse to select the document that you wish to upload. Add any notes that you wish and click **Submit**. A

member of the Career Services staff will review your document and approve it. In the case of resumes or cover letters, you may receive an email with feedback/suggested changes for you to make to the document before it can be approved. If this occurs, make the changes and re-upload the document to Coyote Careers for approval. You will receive an email when your document has been approved. You will then be able to use the document to apply for jobs, or have it be included in the optional Resume Books that our employers sometimes request.

Your approved documents will show up under the **Approved Documents** tab. **Pending Documents** will show the documents that you have uploaded but which haven't been approved yet.

If you would like Employers to be able to view your resume, you can add it to the online Resume book, which Employers can access 24/7. Click on the **Opt-in Resume Book** tab and select the resume you would like to use, then click **Add Resume**.

## USING RESOURCES

The Resources tab includes several resources that you may find useful. Unsure of what to major in or which career path to pursue? Use the **Career Finder** to take a short interest assessment and get a list of careers that might be a good fit for you. You can then click on the careers to learn more about them, including the duties, skills needed, education required, average salary, predicted job growth, similar careers, and more.

The **Career Explorer** will allow you to look up this same information on virtually any career.

Visit the **Document Library** to view resources and handouts from the University of South Dakota career services staff. These handouts are designed to help you in all aspects of your career development.

## SEARCHING FOR JOBS/INTERNSHIPS

Coyote Careers hosts a huge number of job postings. Whether you are searching for a full-time or part-time job, summer job, internship, work study position, or graduate assistantship, this is the place to search.

To begin searching for positions, click on the **Jobs** tab. You can search by keyword, search for all positions of a certain type (ie: all internships), or search the most recent postings. You may also choose to use the Advanced Search feature, through which you can filter the results by several categories. To use this feature, click on **Advanced Search**, fill in the criteria, and click **Search**. Use keyword and/or job function for best results. For example, if you are searching for Accounting positions, type "accounting" in the key word or choose Accounting as a job function.

After you've typed in your search terms, click on **Saved Searches** (next to Advanced Search) to name your search and indicate how often you'd like to receive updates. You will receive an email any time we post a new position that meets your search criteria.

From the job posting, you can click on the job title to get more information about the posting and instruction for applying. Once you

have identified some postings of interest, you can click the Star icon next to the job title to save that position in your Favorites, which you can easily access later by clicking the **Jobs** tab and then **My Favorites**.

If you see the **Apply** button under the job title, it means that you can apply for the position through the Coyote Careers system. To do this, simply click on the Apply button and follow the instructions. Keep in mind that, you will need to have a resume or campus job application uploaded to your Documents section before you apply to a job through the Coyote Careers system. You will be able to access a list of the positions you have applied to by clicking on the **Jobs** tab and **My Job Applications**.

Any on-campus interviews that you apply for will be reflected under the **My OCR Applications** tab.

The **NACELink Network** tab allows you to access a national network of job postings.

The **Recommended Jobs** tab will show you positions that you may be interested in.

## RESEARCHING EMPLOYERS

Clicking the Employers tab will take you to more information about the companies who post positions in Coyote Careers. From the **Employer Directory**, you can view the entire list of employers or search for a specific company. Clicking on the Employer will give you an overview of the company, a listing of positions that the company is currently hiring for, and more. You can also choose to Follow employers to make them Favorites by clicking the ☆ icon.

From the Employers tab, you can also search our entire directory of recruiters and easily connect with recruiters of interest. To do this, click on the Employers tab and **Contact Directory**. Click the ☆ icon to save a contact to your favorites.

## SCHEDULING ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

Occasionally employers will choose to hold interviews for open positions right on campus. You can search for these opportunities by going to the **Interviews** tab. If you qualify for one of the on-campus interviews, you will be able to click the **Schedule** action below the interview information to select the date and time for your interview and then click **Submit**.

If you need to cancel or reschedule your interview, go to the Interviews tab and click on Scheduled Interviews, then click **Cancel** or **Reschedule** under the interview.

If you have been invited to an on-campus interview but don't wish to interview for the position, you can click the **Deny** action below the interview information.

## SEARCH FOR EVENTS

If you'd like to know about upcoming workshops, career fairs, or information sessions, go to the **Events** tab. You can click the **RSVP** button to register for the events. (Walk-ins are also welcome at most events).

# NETWORKING

## Tapping the Hidden Job Market

Networking simply means talking to people. It is a purposeful conversation with the goal of learning more about a career field/industry, researching a company, or identifying internships or employment opportunities. Networking is about building relationships before you need them.



### WHY NETWORK?

1. Traditional job search methods are not necessarily the most effective ones. The majority of all jobs are unadvertised. Networking puts you in touch with people who know about those hidden opportunities. Networking also allows you to learn about openings before they are formally advertised.
2. Networking gives you a personal edge in your job search process that will help you stand out from the crowd. Good networking skills can help you overcome mediocre grades and make you into a strong job candidate, even if your paper credentials are not as strong as you would like.
3. By far the greatest number of jobs are obtained through personal contacts. Mass mailings simply do not pay off and should be avoided (targeted mailings are better, but are most effective when used along with networking).

Learning networking skills now will not only help you get your first internship or entry-level job, but will help you throughout your career. This is not to say that networking should be your only job search strategy. You should employ a variety of strategies during your job search.

### HOW TO NETWORK:

1. Talk to people wherever you go and learn to ask “What do you do?” with sincerity and interest.
2. Make contact with individuals in your network. The conversation will differ depending on your relationship with the individual. You will want to let them know that you are searching for a job or internship opportunity and the type of company you are interested in working for. See if they can suggest other individuals to contact. Some individuals in your network will be more helpful than others. If a person is able to assist you, be sure to stay in touch with them and thank them for providing you with information. Follow up on all leads.
3. When you make contact with a referral who is working in your industry or career field, you can ask them things like “How did you get into this line of work?” “Do you have any ideas about how a person with my background and skills might find a job in this field?” “What trends do you see in this industry and how might I take advantage of them?”
4. Try to set up interviews with individuals to whom you are referred who you believe could be in a position to hire someone with your skill set.
5. Set up a job shadowing experience in a company that you can see yourself employed by. Job Shadowing is when you observe and follow someone around for all or part of his or her work day to find out about an occupation.
6. Set up informational interviews with individuals working in the field.



# NETWORKING SCRIPTS

The key to networking successfully is to build relationships first, ask for assistance second, and finally to offer your assistance. If you are like most people, calling someone to inquire about job leads can be very intimidating. To help you feel more at ease with the process of networking, here are some sample scripts that you might use to contact someone in your network.

## BASIC STRUCTURE OF TELEPHONE CALL:

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Explain how you heard about the company or who referred you.
3. State that you are in the process of a job search and give them a 15 second summary of your background and accomplishments.
4. State that you are not calling to ask them for a job. You simply want a few minutes of their time to get their advice and ask them a few questions.
5. Ask questions that you have prepared in advance (see information on Informational Interviews for possible questions).
6. Ask additional questions as you sense the person is open to continuing the conversation.
7. Ask them who they would contact if they were in your shoes.
8. Ask how they know the person and why they think you should contact them. Ask for the best way to reach the individual and if you can use their name as a referral when you make the contact.
9. Ask if there is any other advice or suggestions that they could share.
10. Thank them for their time and end the call.

## SAMPLE TELEPHONE SCRIPT

“Hi Ms. Smith, this is Charlie Coyote. I saw your profile on LinkedIn and am calling to see if you have just a few minutes to visit with me. Do you have a moment?”

I am in the process of job searching right now. I’m not calling to ask you for a job, I just wondered if you could offer me some advice. I’m looking for a position as a \_\_\_\_\_(job title)\_\_\_\_\_ at a company like (list 2 or 3 companies that you would like to work for). I am (give your 15 second summary)... I’d love to work in the \_\_\_\_\_(industry)\_\_\_\_\_ field and was wondering if you might be able to offer me your perspective on the industry and some advice regarding my job search.

Begin asking open ended questions.

Close the conversation by asking them who they would contact next if they were in your shoes and try to get contact info for the individual. “If you were in my shoes, who would you contact next?” “Do you know what the best way is to reach him/her?” “If I contact \_\_\_\_\_, would you mind if I let them know that you referred me to them?”

“Thank you so much for all of your time and advice. I will definitely follow up with all of your suggestions.”

## SAMPLE EMAIL

Dear Ms. Smith:

John Doe, Business Professor at the University of South Dakota, suggested that I contact you and asked me to pass along his regards. I understand that you specialize...(mention their job/industry) and I am particularly interested in learning more about your work . I hope to pursue a career in (industry).

Over the past few years, I have worked for ...(discuss prior experience or coursework related to the type of position you are interested in).

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to talk with you to discuss your current projects, as well as the career opportunities that you feel are available in this industry.

I realize that you are on a tight schedule and I would greatly appreciate any time that you could spare to meet with me. Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Charlie Coyote

# PREPARING FOR A JOB FAIR

## Before the Job Fair

- **Prepare a Resume.** Bring several resumes to submit to employers. Bring a portfolio, briefcase or professional folder to keep track of employer information and your resumes.
- **Prepare and rehearse your “elevator speech or 60 second summary.”** You may have less than a minute to present your qualifications, so think carefully about the content. Include your name, academic standing, major, relevant work experience, relevant qualifications, opportunities you are seeking and knowledge of the company or institution.
- **Come prepared—do your homework.** Before the fair, review the directory of opportunities. If you spend time getting some background on an organization, this will allow you to ask specific questions. This impresses representatives because it shows a genuine interest in the organization.
- **Dress appropriately.** First impressions are important. While campus attire is acceptable for fairs, it would be most appropriate if you dress business professional (especially if you are going into a field that requires this). Treat job fairs as you would an interview.
- **Get your bearings.** When you arrive, take a few minutes to review the map and directory for the fair.
- **Prioritize the organizations you’re most interested in.** If your schedule allows, you may find it easiest to start with the employers in which you’re the least interested. This will allow you to hone your approach and to be most confident when you approach the employers you’re especially excited about. Be sure to balance this tip with the reality that you may have little time and that many other students may be interested in the same employers. Assume that you will need to wait to speak with some employers.
- **Introduce yourself.** Extend your hand, say “hello”, state your name, and give the elevator speech you have prepared. Have your resume ready to give to the employer. Take the cue from the employer. They may begin asking questions immediately. Don’t forget to ask questions and display your knowledge of the employer.
- **Take notes** when you inquire about next steps and the possibility of talking with additional managers.
- **Ask the representative for his/her card.** Having the business card of the representative you have just spoken with will ensure that you have the proper spelling of the representative’s name and his or her contact information.

- **Respect employers’ materials/sample items.** Some employers bring large quantities of print materials or “giveaways” clearly intended for students to take. Other employers bring a few copies of print materials, sample products, etc. as displays at their tables. Always check with employers before taking materials from their tables.
- **Be courteous!** In addition to representing yourself, you also represent your department and the University. Demonstrate sensitivity to other students waiting to speak with employers by keeping your questions brief and offering to continue your conversation at a later time. Enjoy the fair and your interaction with the employers.

## After the Fair

- **Follow up!** Be sure to follow up with each recruiter you meet either via phone call, email, or mail. It’s courteous, professional and typically expected, even after casual job fairs. Following up is crucial. It helps create an impression with the employer you have met and assists in building your network. Remember to promptly send thank you notes.

## During the Fair

- **Allow yourself adequate time.** Come as early as possible. Fairs close promptly at publicized ending times to accommodate recruiters’ travel arrangements.

# SOCIAL MEDIA / Brand Yourself!

Your social media profiles are never going to be 100 percent private. Therefore, it is important that you think before you type. The majority of employers will check you out on the various social sites. Having your profile in tip-top shape and avoiding embarrassing pictures and posts will save you a lot of grief later!

## Tips for improving your image on social media sites:

**Google Yourself-** Do a quick search on your name and see what comes up. Is it positive? If it isn't, fix it!

**Log out of Facebook and do a search on yourself.** What information is easy to see? Are your security settings where they need to be?

**What can your friends see?** Ask a few friends to login so you can see what they are able to see on your profile. If an employer wants it bad enough, they can get access to this information.

**Remove embarrassing or incriminating pictures.** Keg stands, pictures where you are clearly intoxicated, and pictures that suggest illegal activity are not appropriate.

**Check your Facebook posts.** Do you say anything about being late to work or hating your boss? Do you swear in your posts? Are your posts negative in nature? Take them down! These are red flags to employers.

**What pages/topics do you "like."** Employers can see these, too, and they say a lot about you. Interests such as biking, reading, and specific movies are fine. When you "like" pages that are titled "I love boobs" or "I hate professor X" it will reflect negatively on you.

**Clean up your Twitter feed.** Remove posts that put you in a bad light. Think from the perspective of someone who doesn't know you. What kind of person would they think you are based on your posts?

**Jazz up your LinkedIn Profile!** Complete your LinkedIn profile. Use your resume to start filling in the information and then expand on it! This is not limited to space, so you can elaborate on your resume and detail your accomplishments. If an employer can see a great LinkedIn profile, they may not spend a ton of time looking at your Facebook profile and digging for information.

**Take a look at the overall picture.** Based on the information you find, what kind of person do you portray yourself as? Make sure this is as friendly and professional as possible. Make changes so that you look like the person you would like to portray.

*You have access to millions of people with social media sites. Use them! When looking for a job, tell your network and be specific. You never know who might see it and have the perfect position for you! Use those sites to search for job openings, too. Use the job postings on LinkedIn, "like" career pages for companies you are interested in and join the conversation, and follow companies for job postings on Twitter.*



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# NETWORKING THROUGH LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is a professional networking site designed to help you connect with alumni and other professionals in industries and organizations that relate to your career and academic interests. Think of LinkedIn as a professional Facebook. Students often use Facebook to interact with friends and find others with similar social interests. LinkedIn is a place to share interests, ask questions, and network with professionals from a wide range of job titles and industries.

## LinkedIn.com

When you start with LinkedIn, you may only have a few connections, but you have access to network with thousands (connections of your connections). Growing your network through connections is easy.

### AS A COLLEGE STUDENT, YOU CAN UTILIZE LINKEDIN TO:

- Establish a professional profile (your online resume)
- Build your professional network
- Connect to USD alumni and other professionals in industries/organizations that interest you
- Learn about current trends in fields that interest you
- Find internships and jobs





# LINKEDIN.COM

## Getting Started

### CREATE YOUR PROFILE

Your profile should demonstrate the knowledge and skills you have developed that relate to your interests. It should only include information relevant to your job and internship search. Also, be sure to include a mature and professional photo. Use the summary section to outline key skills and experiences that are relevant to the industry that interests you.

*For more information, go to [university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students](http://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students)*

### JOIN GROUPS

Groups are a great way to meet and interact with people without having to request an introduction. Groups are formed around industries, colleges, clubs and associations. After creating your profile, LinkedIn will suggest groups for you, or you can search for specific groups. After joining a group, participate in the discussions and soon you will feel comfortable enough to start asking questions on career advice or for help with your job search.

### START MAKING CONNECTIONS

Contrary to popular belief, networking does not mean reaching out to strangers. The best networks begin with those you already know, and then grow your network based on personal referrals. Start building your LinkedIn network by uploading your online address book and start connecting to friends, relatives, and others you know.

### GROW YOUR NETWORK

When you start with LinkedIn, you may only have a few connections, but you have access to network with thousands (connections of your connections). Growing your network through connections is easy. LinkedIn's introductions feature can help build your network or find a contact at a firm you're interested in. You can see the connections between you and the person you want to meet, and then use the introduction form to request an introduction.



### APPLY FOR JOBS OR INTERNSHIPS

LinkedIn posts content of interest, including job openings, on your home page. You can submit your resume/cover letter directly to the poster, and view the company profile to see who works at the firm.

A colorful advertisement for LifeScape, a non-profit organization. The background is orange with white and red text. At the top, it says "Want a PART-TIME JOB with BIG-TIME REWARD?". Below this, there are three bullet points: "Make a difference for a mission-based organization", "New! Increased starting pay!", and "Flexible hours and scheduling". In the center, there is a photograph of two women smiling and hugging. Below the photo is the LifeScape logo, which features a heart with a leaf inside, and the text "LifeScape Creating Pathways. Improving Lives. Sioux Falls &amp; Rapid City". At the bottom, it says "Apply online at LifeScapeSD.org" and "QUESTIONS? Contact Kelsey at 605.444.9545 or kelsey.hilberg@LifeScapeSD.org".

# NETWORKING TIPS

## QUICK TIPS FOR NETWORKING

Networking is about building relationships and connections in a purposeful, organized way. Networking is not about asking for jobs, but asking for advice and assistance. When you network, your contact should involve gathering information about a career or industry. When connecting with others, you will want to be polite and professional in your email or message. Clearly articulate who you are, how you are connected, and your objectives.

“I found your profile through the University of South Dakota Alumni Group on LinkedIn. I am a senior history major at USD. I am very interested in pursuing a career in consulting. Would you have some time to discuss what you do and what recommendations you would have for someone with a social sciences background looking to enter consulting? We can discuss this via email or phone, whichever is more convenient for you. I look forward to hearing from you.”

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What recommendations would you have for someone looking to enter the industry?
- What skills are required?
- What are the typical entry channels?
- What types of extracurricular and internship experiences would best prepare me for a career in this industry?
- I'm interested in your organization or industry. What skills and experiences would help me stand out as an applicant?
- Since I am interested in this industry, what are the key companies, organizations and professional associations that I should know about?
- Is there anyone else that I should talk to?

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK GROUPS

- How can students find summer internships in your field?
- Are there other means of gaining experience before graduation?
- What abilities are important for success in your field?
- What personality traits or characteristics are important?
- What is the skill set that an employer in your field would look for in a new hire?
- What advice do you have for students who are preparing to enter your field?
- What related occupations and industries might I explore?
- What other fields could you see yourself moving into?
- Where can someone in an entry-level position expect to be in 2, 5 or 10 years?



# **Write Your Winning Resume**

# RESUME DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

## FORMATTING

- Easy to read or skim (standard margins are one-inch with 12 point font)
- Aesthetically pleasing & professional (use of font, spacing, horizontal lines, bold, italics, etc.)
- Consistent placement of information, bolding, spacing, italics, etc.
- Format your resume yourself. Avoid using resume templates.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

- First provide your name, address, phone number, and email. Be professional. Funny email addresses or voicemails are inappropriate. Utilize the privacy settings of social networking sites to protect your public persona.
- Section Headings: use typical headings such as Education, Experience, Leadership Activities and Awards & Honors.
- Objective or Qualifications Statement (optional): use either an objective statement that clearly defines your career goal or desired position OR a qualifications summary that includes three to five of your top qualifications.

## EDUCATION SECTION

- Cite your degree correctly (See the university's catalog), followed by your major and institution.
- If you earned more than one degree, list the most current degree first.
- Include any minors, endorsements, and possibly relevant coursework.
- Omit high school information, unless it is relevant to the position (you are applying for a position in your home town) or possibly if you are a first year student.
- If you are a transfer student, include the name of your first school only if you refer to it elsewhere.
- Include your graduation month and year. If you have not yet graduated, list your anticipated graduation date.
- If your GPA is high, include it on your resume. If your cumulative GPA is lower than your major GPA, consider listing major GPA.

- You may also include study abroad or other honors, such as the Dean's List, Honors Program, or Honor Societies.
- If you financed your education, you may include this here. "Fully funded education" or "Maintained a 3.7 grade point average while working full-time to fund 80% of tuition."

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, TEACHING EXPERIENCE, RELATED EXPERIENCE, ETC.

- List your professional positions in chronological order, with the most recent position presented first, followed by the less current ones. For each position, provide your job title, location, and dates of employment. If the position was seasonal or held during the academic year, use "Summer, Spring or Fall 2011" to describe it.
- Use one-line bulleted statements that begin with a strong action verb and concisely describe your accomplishments. Quantify these accomplishments whenever possible. Avoid using weak words such as responsible for, helped, and duties included. Focus on the needs of the employer such as making money, solving a problem, expanding their business, saving time, attracting new business, and retaining customers. Avoid listing tasks/duties that are understood by the title of the job (ie: do not list "prepared and served drinks" under a Bartending job. It is understood).
  - Questions to ask yourself as you explore your skills and accomplishments include: What were your primary duties and responsibilities? Why did you perform these duties? What were the main objectives of your office? What did you hope to accomplish? Did you receive any feedback from customers or supervisors? Was your organization as a whole ever evaluated?
- Do not start these statements with an "I" as that is understood.
- Use "buzz words" whenever possible.
- Use past tense for previous positions and present tense for current ones.
- Your resume is a marketing tool. If the information does not strengthen your qualifications, leave it out.
- Stress your assets, not your liabilities. Include only those experiences that demonstrate your success.



- Avoid limiting experience to paid positions. Include relevant leadership positions and volunteer work under this heading. If you list them under the “Experience” heading, do not include them elsewhere.

### OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Include volunteer work, study abroad, co-curricular activities, awards, scholarships, research, student activities, professional memberships, conferences, technology, and internships.

- Omit personal information such as religious affiliation, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, marital status, height, weight, salary requirements, and age. Include personal hobbies and interests only if they are relevant to the job.
- References are listed separately on a new page.

## Action Words

### ***Accomplishments***

Achieved  
Expanded  
Improved  
Reduced  
Resolved  
Restored  
Spearheaded  
Transformed

Organized

Prepared  
Processed  
Purchased  
Recorded  
Retrieved  
Specified  
Tabulated  
Validated

Designed

Developed  
Established  
Illustrated  
Initiated  
Instituted  
Integrated  
Originated  
Performed

### ***Management***

Administered  
Analyzed  
Assigned  
Attained  
Chaired  
Coordinated  
Delegated  
Developed  
Directed  
Evaluated  
Executed  
Improved  
Increased  
Organized  
Oversaw  
Planned  
Prioritized  
Produced  
Reviewed  
Strengthened  
Supervised

### ***Research***

Clarified  
Collected  
Evaluated  
Examined  
Extracted  
Identified  
Inspected  
Interpreted  
Investigated  
Organized  
Reviewed  
Summarized  
Surveyed  
Systematized

Demystified

Developed  
Enabled  
Encouraged  
Evaluated  
Explained  
Facilitated  
Guided  
Informed  
Instructed  
Persuaded  
Set Goals  
Stimulated  
Trained

### ***Advertising***

Accounted for  
Convinced  
Generated  
Improved  
Influenced  
Launched  
Marketed  
Persuaded  
Promoted  
Recommended  
Secured  
Sold

### ***Communication***

Addressed  
Arranged  
Authored  
Collaborated  
Convinced  
Corresponded  
Developed  
Directed  
Drafted  
Edited  
Enlisted  
Influenced  
Interpreted  
Mediated  
Moderated  
Negotiated  
Persuaded  
Recruited  
Spoke  
Wrote

### ***Financial***

Administered  
Allocated  
Analyzed  
Appraised  
Audited  
Balanced  
Budgeted  
Calculated  
Developed  
Forecast  
Managed  
Projected

### ***Clerical***

Approved  
Arranged  
Catalogued  
Classified  
Collected  
Compiled  
Executed  
Generated  
Implemented  
Inspected  
Monitored  
Operated

### ***Creative***

Acted  
Conceptualized  
Created  
Customized

### ***Helping***

Assessed  
Assisted  
Clarified  
Coached  
Counseled  
Demonstrated  
Educated  
Expedited  
Facilitated  
Guided  
Motivated  
Referred  
Rehabilitated

### ***Public Relations***

Advised  
Collaborated  
Consulted  
Facilitated  
Guided  
Handled  
Integrated  
Monitored  
Motivated  
Recruited  
Sponsored

### ***Resourcefulness***

Accomplished  
Awarded  
Corrected  
Diverted  
Eliminated  
Identified  
Improved  
Pioneered  
Rectified  
Solved  
Strengthened  
Surpassed

### ***Teaching***

Adapted  
Advised  
Clarified  
Coached  
Communicated  
Coordinated

### ***Technical***

Assembled  
Built  
Calculated  
Computed  
Configured  
Designed  
Devised  
Engineered  
Fabricated  
Installed  
Maintained  
Operated  
Overhauled  
Performed  
Trouble-Shooting  
Programmed  
Remodeled  
Repaired  
Retrieved  
Solved

# SAMPLE RESUME 1

## CHARLIE COYOTE

1234 Cherry St.  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
605-677-1234  
Charlie.Coyote@coyotes.usd.edu

**Objective:** To obtain a challenging position in Human Resources with an organization that will benefit from my strong analytical, verbal, interpersonal & written communication, and leadership skills.

**Education:** May 2008 University of South Dakota Vermillion, SD  
Bachelor of Business Administration  
**Specialization in Human Resources;** Psychology minor  
G.P.A. of 3.45 on a 4.0 scale

### **Human Resources Experience**

January 2004 – May 2004 Elder Care of Dane County Sioux Falls, SD  
**Human Resources Intern**  
Assisted the Employment Coordinator with all aspects of the recruiting process  
Researched new/alternative recruitment sources  
Participated in and conducted interviews  
Performed mock interviews for participants of the CNA Alliance Program

### **Leadership Activities**

August 2006 – 2007 University of South Dakota Vermillion, SD  
**Community Advisor**  
Served as a student leader for an all male floor of 35 first-year students who represented various backgrounds  
Developed creative marketing campaigns for monthly events that generated over 75% student participation  
Supervised a building of over 200 residents while on duty and facilitated monthly floor meetings  
Designed and implemented over 20 educational or social programs that built a cohesive community, prevented at-risk drinking and assisted in the acclimation of first year students  
Attended training sessions on drug education, diversity advocacy, leadership and work-life balance

August 2005 – May 2006 University of South Dakota Vermillion, SD  
**Fundraising Chair, Habitat For Humanity**  
Coordinated fundraising initiatives, raising over \$10,000  
Designed marketing plans and programs to encourage fundraising participation  
Organized annual Bowl-A-Thon event that was attended by over 100 participants  
Raised \$600 for fall building projects through campus Habitat T-shirt Campaign

### **Award, Honors, & Other Activities**

Dean's List (3 semesters)  
Community Advisor of the Semester Award  
Golden Key Honor Society  
Delta Sigma Pi

# SAMPLE RESUME 2

Box 453, 200 S Plum St, Vermillion, SD 57069  
605-624-3334 Emgonnagetajob@usd.edu

## Emma Gonnagetajob

### *Summary of Qualifications*

Well-rounded individual possessing liberal arts education in conjunction with experience from a variety of business settings. Skilled in customer service and sale statistics with an interest in financial analysis. Demonstrated ability to impact business results through analytic mindset, communication skills and organized proficiency. Interest in ensuring optimal results for a company through analysis and diagnosis of financial data.

### Education

**University of South Dakota**, Vermillion, SD May 2015  
Bachelor of Business Administration, Finance Major  
GPA: 3.91 on a 4.0 scale

### Experience

**Bank Examiner Intern**, FDIC, Omaha, NE Summer 2014  
• Participated in risk management bank examinations  
• Analyzed bank's financial condition, investments, accounting practices and compliance with laws and regulations.

**Sales Associate**, Marshall Field's, Sioux Falls, SD February 2011-August 2013  
• Strengthened customer satisfaction through assessment of guests' needs.  
• Trained new employees as a result of personal success and leadership.  
• Contributed to department success through assertiveness and collaborated with team effort.  
• Achieved credit goals through aggressive sales tactics.

**Server**, Famous Dave's, Sioux Falls, SD June-August 2010, 2011  
• Provided excellent customer service to guests through analysis and response to their needs.  
• Chosen to train new employees because of superior performance in all aspects of the job.

### Leadership Activities & Awards

Mentor, Big Brother Program, July 2011-Present  
Member, Alpha Beta Chi Business Fraternity, 2013-Present  
Co-Chair, Dakota Days Royalty Committee, 2012  
Perfect Work Attendance, Marshall Fields, 2012  
Named to Dean's List every semester

References available upon request

# SAMPLE RESUME 3

## CHARLIE COYOTE

Charlie.Coyote@coyotes.usd.edu

605-555-1234

*Permanent Address*  
123 Main Street 100  
Yankton, SD 57078

*Current Address*  
Cherry Street, Apt. B4  
Vermillion, SD 57069

### PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Well-traveled, well-educated, and intensely motivated student seeking an exciting internship opportunity. Strong interpersonal, communication, time management, and special events planning skills. Fluent in Spanish. Basic language skills in Mandarin Chinese.

### EDUCATION

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA**, Vermillion, SD

**Candidate for Bachelor of Business Administration Degree** (May 2012)

**Major in Business Administration & Minor in Spanish**

**Semester Abroad in Barcelona, Spain** (Spring 2010)

#### *Academic Honors & Awards:*

Current GPA: 3.59; Dean's List, Every Semester; Member of University Honors Program

#### *Relevant Coursework:*

Spanish for Business Communications; International Business; International Finance

#### *Extracurricular & Leadership Activities:*

Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority, 2008 to Present

- Membership VP (Elected to 7-member Executive Board; Directed sorority recruitment)
- Participant, Regional Leadership Conference (Attended as Board Member)
- Strollers Cast Director (Scripted and choreographed production)
- Social Chair (Planned events with other sororities and fraternities)

Spanish Club, 2008 to Present

- Treasurer (Maintained accurate financial records and audited all committee financial activities)

Dance Marathon, 2008 & 2009

- Fundraising Chair (Exceeded annual fundraising goals)

Dakota Days Committee, 2008

- Member (Collaborated with a team of 16 committee members to plan over 20 activities during Homecoming week)

*The Volante* Newspaper, 2008

- Staff Writer (Wrote weekly articles for student newspaper)

### EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Waitress/Hostess, ABC Galley, Yankton, SD

Summers 2009 & 2010

Office Assistant, Smith Auto Sales, Yankton, SD

Summers 2007 & 2008

Sales Associate, KMart, Yankton, SD

2006 to 2008



# SAMPLE FEDERAL RESUME

If you plan to work for the federal government, you will need to include some specific information on your resume regarding your work history. See [my.usajobs.com](http://my.usajobs.com) for additional information.

## Uncle Sam

1111 Career Place  
Needajob, SD 50000  
605-123-1234  
[unclesam@gmail.com](mailto:unclesam@gmail.com)

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**Country of citizenship:** United States of America  
**Veterans' Preference:** No  
**Highest Grade:** GS-0201-13, 10/2005-Present  
**Contact Current Employer:** Yes

### AVAILABILITY

**Job Type:** Permanent  
**Work Schedule:** Full Time

### DESIRED LOCATIONS

US-MD-Montgomery County

### WORK EXPERIENCE

<b>Employer Name:</b>	National Institutes of Health National Cancer Institute 6130 Executive Blvd., Room 4296 Bethesda, MD 20892	Dates: 6/95 – Present Grade Level: GS-12 Salary: \$67,555 Hours Per Week: 40
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**Supervisor:** John Smith (301) 444-1111 (Permission to contact)

**Title:** Program Manager:

- Serve as Program Manager for \$8,000,000 contract, with two locations, seven Federal and 12 contract employees
- Manage a staff of four Program Analysts and three Program Assistants
- Advise Administrative Officers on extramural program issues including grant funding, policies, and procedures
- Counsel grantees on grant questions and concerns
- Present over 30 grant writing workshops to grantees and staff per year

# SAMPLE REFERENCE FORM

## Charlie Coyote

(Use the same heading format as your resume.)

### Permanent Address

1654 Louisiana Avenue N  
St. Louis Park, MN 55416  
(952) 555 - 1234  
email: charlie.coyote@coyotes.usd.edu

### Current Address

University of South Dakota, Box 000  
1000 Cherry Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
(605) 624 - 1234

### PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

#### Name of Advisor

Academic Advisor, School of Business  
The University of South Dakota  
Beacom School of Business  
414 E. Clark Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
(605) 677-1234  
email: academic.advisor@usd.edu

#### Mr. Former Supervisor

Director of Business Services  
XYZ Company  
12345 4th Ave. Ste. 800  
Minneapolis, MN 55102  
(612) 555-1234  
email: john.doe@xyz.com

#### John Doe

Faculty, Biology Department  
The University of South Dakota  
Burr House  
414 E. Clark Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
(605) 677-5307  
email: reference name@usd.edu

# COVER LETTER DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

- Use standard business-letter format (i.e., block format) with single space paragraphs and double space between paragraphs. Customize each cover letter to the position.
- Address the individual by name (Mr./Ms./Dr.). Do not address the person by his or her first name. If you do not know their gender, use their full name (e.g., Dear Pat Smith). If you do not have the name of an employer, address it as “Dear Hiring Manager” or “Dear Search Committee”.
- *Lead Paragraph:* This should identify the position you are applying for, state where you learned about the opening, and communicate your enthusiasm for the opening. Share any company research you have gathered or your long-term career goals. Attract attention and entice them to read your resume thoroughly.
- *The Body:* This should sell your background and highlight your qualifications. Explain why you would be a great fit for this position. Match your skills to the required skills/qualifications in the job description. Provide examples and evidence. Be persuasive and refer to your enclosed resume for additional details. Emphasize what you can do for the employer rather than what you hope to gain from the experience.
- *Concluding Paragraph:* Identify your follow-up steps and close with a request for an interview. Thank the employer for their time and consideration.

## ■ Other Tips:

- › Proof your letter thoroughly to make sure that it is free of grammatical errors. Have it critiqued.
- › Write clearly and simply. Avoid reiterating verbatim the content of your resume, identifying your

weaknesses, beginning too many sentences with “I,” or exceeding one page.

- › Print it on paper that matches your resume.
- › Remember to sign your letter (unless emailing).

## SAMPLE COVER LETTER 1

CHARLIE COYOTE

1234 Cherry Street • Vermillion, SD 57069 • 605-677-1234 • charlie.coyote@coyotes.usd.edu

October 19, 2014

Rick Crutor  
HR Director  
ABC Company  
4321 Cherry Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069

Dear Mr. Crutor:

Your advertisement for an HR Intern fits my qualifications perfectly, and I am writing to express my interest in and enthusiasm for the position.

Currently, I am completing a business degree from the University of South Dakota with a specialization in Human Resources Management. I have enrolled in a variety of human resource development courses that have solidified my qualifications for this opportunity. Course highlights include but are not limited to: Leadership and Development, Advanced Topics of Human Resources: Training & Development, and Strategic Human Resources Management.

Based on your description of the ideal candidate, I also offer:

- › A solid educational foundation in organizational development, employee training and development skills and knowledge of how to use technology to improve individual/organizational performance.
- › A proven ability to build rapport with individuals from all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- › A track record of excellent performance as a part-time/summer employee concurrent with full-time college enrollment.
- › Technical proficiency in database programs (including Oracle) and MS Office Suite.

If you agree that my services would be valuable to ABC Company, I would very much like to meet in person to learn more about your HR support needs. Please feel free to call me at 605-677-1234 or email at stew.denton@usd.edu. Thank you for your time and review of the enclosed resume, and I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely yours,

*Charlie Coyote*  
Charlie Coyote

# SAMPLE COVER LETTER 2

1021 W. Ash  
Madison, SD 57042

March 25, 2011

Dr. John Douglas  
Great Plains Dental  
5121 S. Solberg, Suite 120  
Sioux Falls, SD 57108

Dear Dr. Douglas:

As I prepare to graduate from the University of South Dakota in May with a Bachelor of Science degree in Dental Hygiene, I am seeking a position in an office that provides not only preventive and restorative dentistry, but also cosmetic dentistry. Your office has been highly recommended to me. I would love the opportunity to talk with you about a position. I feel I would be an asset to your practice because of my education, career interest, and most importantly, my compassion for other people.

The program at USD has prepared me for the transition from student to dental professional in many ways. Our clinical career starts almost immediately in the program. As you can see from my resume, we have the opportunity to see a wide variety and a large amount of patients. This past semester, I served more than 100 patients. Oral hygiene is critical to life in many aspects, and I feel I could be a positive addition to better improving oral hygiene in your area.

I am eager to start practicing as a hygienist and becoming part of such a growing and respected profession. In my time spent in the USD Dental Hygiene program, professors, clinical instructors and dental professionals with whom I have worked have commented on my upbeat attitude, leadership skills, patient rapport, and time management skills. I feel other aspects of my life have made me even more of an asset to this profession. Being involved in basketball has given me the opportunity to work closely with others as a team, and being voted team captain gave me the chance to demonstrate my leadership skills.

I would love the opportunity to meet you and learn more about your dental clinic. I look forward to speaking with you. If you have any questions or if you would like to set up a time to meet, please call me at (605) 999-9999. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Sandy Coyote*

Sandy Coyote



# **Ace the Interview**



# TYPES OF JOB INTERVIEWS

**Individual vs. Panel:** One-on-one or a group of people asking questions of the candidate. If interviewed by a group of people, make sure to give eye contact to all.

**Telephone vs. On-Site:** Telephone interviews are typically used to narrow the applicant pool. Try to use a landline and don't use speaker phone. If you have trouble hearing them, don't be afraid to ask them to speak up. You can use notes but don't rely on them too much because you don't want to sound too scripted. For on-site interviews, your appearance and non-verbal behavior becomes very important.

**One-Shot Interview or Follow-up.** Some interviews are initial and will lead to a follow-up, more in-depth interview.

**Social:** Interviews may be conducted over a meal. Do not get too comfortable and say too much. Eat carefully and be polite. Do not drink alcohol. Follow the lead of your host or hostess. Pick a food that is small and easy to eat. Take small bites to avoid speaking with food in your mouth. Say "please," and "thank you" to servers.

**Group Interview:** Some interviewers may interview multiple candidates at once. The idea is to see how individuals interact with each other. Highlight your individuality. Try to make yourself stand out.

**Video Interview:** Interviewing from a distance through a video chat software such as Skype is becoming increasingly common. Treat this just like any other interview. Make sure you are dressed appropriately and use eye contact, watch your non-verbals, sit up straight, and let your personality shine through. Test out the software in advance and make sure your sound and lighting are adequate. Use a neutral back ground.



# THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Getting invited to the interview signals that the organization or company thinks you've got the right experience and skill set to do the job, but most people fail to impress in their interviews. Follow these strategies to make sure you ace the interview.

## I. PREPARATION

### ***Research the company.***

Research the company's history, mission and vision statement, biggest competitors, etc. More than likely the interviewer will ask questions about the company. By knowing this information, the interviewer will know that you have taken the initiative to research the company.

### ***Prepare your 60-second summary.***

Be prepared to answer the question, "tell me a little about yourself." Make sure you relate the answer to specific aspects of the job or company.

### ***Prepare questions to ask the interviewer.***

Ask questions that are relevant to the job and organization. These questions will help you make an informed decision about taking the job and will also display your interest in the position. You should prepare a minimum of three questions to ask.

### ***Bring extra copies of your resume along with a list of references.***

### ***Mock Interview.***

Meet with a member of the Career Services staff for a mock interview to receive feedback and polish your interviewing skills.

## II. OPENING MOVES

### ***Dress for success.***

All employers look for well-groomed candidates. Preferably, men should wear a suit, tie, and dress shoes. Women should wear a suit, stockings, and dress shoes with minimum make-up, jewelry and perfume. It is always better to overdress than to be too casual.

### ***Arrive Early.***

### ***Utilize effective communication techniques (verbal and non-verbal).***

Be energetic, give a firm handshake, maintain good voice/tone quality, maintain good eye contact, display good posture and don't forget to smile.

## III. THE INTERVIEW

### ***Give quality answers.***

Employers want to know what you can offer the company. Give examples of your past performance as this is the best indicator of your future performance. Be sure to speak positively of all prior employers and experiences.

### ***Emphasize your strengths.***

Inform the employer about your skills. The interview process is about selling yourself.

### ***Be honest.***

Don't exaggerate or lie about your past work history, education, G.P.A., extra-curricular activities, etc. The majority of employers will verify your background.

### ***Remain calm.***

Stay away from nervous habits such as tapping your foot, playing with your hair or biting your nails. Staying confident will prove to the interviewer that you are secure in your abilities to do the job.

### ***Ask questions.***

Ask the questions that you have prepared and any additional questions you may have thought of during the interview.

### ***Close the job interview positively.***

Thank the interviewer for his or her time and shake the interviewer's hand. Express your interest again in the position.

## IV. FOLLOW UP

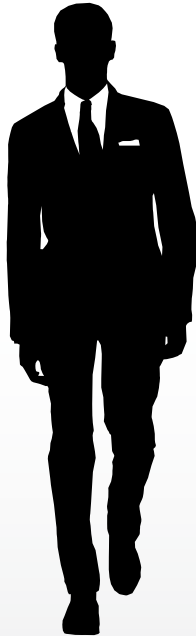
### ***Send a thank-you note.***

This should be sent within 24 hours of the interview. If you interviewed with more than one person, be sure to send each person an individualized thank you.

### ***Make a follow-up phone call.***

If you have not heard from your contact or the company by the indicated time, make a follow up call to find out about the status of the position and your application.

# DRESSING FOR SUCCESS



**Men**



**Women**

- A two piece suit in navy or another dark color.
  - A tie in a simple pattern that matches the colors of your suit.
  - Button down dress shirt (white or pastel) with an under-shirt underneath.
  - Polished dress shoes in a dark color.
  - No earrings or other piercings! If you normally wear one, take it out.
  - Get a haircut and shave/make sure facial hair is trimmed.
  - Clean trimmed fingernails.
  - Minimal or no cologne.
  - Light briefcase or portfolio.
  - Hide or cover tattoos if possible.
- A neutral colored suit in navy or another dark color.
  - Skirt length should never be shorter than just above the knee.
  - Blouses should be cotton or silk (white or pastel). Wear a camisole underneath.
  - Pantyhose should be flawless and conservative in color.
  - Basic pumps with 1"-2" heel (no strappy sandals or platforms).
  - Simple accessories. No visible body piercings.
  - Minimal makeup in conservative colors.
  - Minimal or no perfume.
  - Simple and conservative hairstyle (no Snooki hair!).
  - Neat nails and neutral or no polish.
  - Light briefcase or portfolio.

# 60 SECOND SUMMARY

If you had 60 seconds to explain who you are and what you can bring to a potential employer, what would you say?

Interviews almost always begin with some version of the statement, “Tell me a little about yourself.” Having a 60-second summary prepared is critical because it provides a starting point for more in-depth interview conversation. It can also help you focus and give you confidence during an interview or networking opportunity. The 60-second summary is a brief description of your background, which may include education, work experience, and special skills. Your summary should contain your most positive points. Your education will definitely be one of your strengths, but be sure to include any relevant work experience. If your experience is limited, talk about special skills you possess. Above all, keep your 60-second

summary brief and to the point. This is not the time to review the details of your resume. A successful 60-second summary will focus on what you have to offer the organization or individual you are trying to impress, promoting yourself in an appropriate way. The 60-second timeframe is not hard and fast, but do try to keep it brief and to the point. It’s about displaying some focus in response to a rather open-ended question, so that the interviewer can get a sense of your experience, motivations, and how clearly you can express yourself on a topic that ought to be quite familiar—YOU!!

## Outline

### EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

“I’m majoring in \_\_\_\_\_ (or I’m graduating in May with a degree in \_\_\_\_\_).” Include an area of concentration or your minor if appropriate. If there is an interesting story about how you selected this major, briefly include that.

### RELATED EXPERIENCE

“I am especially interested in this opportunity because of my experience in... (include mention of internship, summer job, class research project, etc.)”

### STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Discuss your strengths and any accomplishments you have made related to your job target.

### SUMMARY OR GOAL STATEMENT

Explain why you think you would be a good fit for the position or company. This is a good place to show that you have done your research on the organization.

## Sample

I’m graduating in May with a degree in Media and Journalism. I’ve always wanted to work for a prominent publication such as yours and feel that my education and experience will be a good fit for this position.

I have served as a Staff Writer and more recently Editor for *The Volante* (USD’s student-run newspaper), which is consistently recognized as one of the nation’s best college weekly newspapers. I am very proud of the fact that I personally won awards for two of my articles. As Editor, I had to assign stories to staff writers, decide which stories to run, and complete the layout of the paper. This required excellent communication, organizational, and time management skills.

My co-workers and instructors tell me that I’m about as ambitious and dedicated as they come and I hope to have the chance to prove to you what an asset I would be.

# COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

An effective cover letter and resume will get you an interview. The interview is your opportunity to get the job. It is critical that you make your best impression. Practice and preparation are keys to having a successful interview. Identify the questions that may be asked and prepare your responses. Examples are listed below.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF

Tell me about yourself.  
 What do you consider to be one of your weaknesses? Strengths?  
 What have been your greatest work and non-work accomplishments during the past two years?  
 Describe three things that are most important to you in a job?  
 What have you been doing since you graduated from college?  
 Since you left your last job?  
 What qualifications do you have that indicate you will be successful in your field? How do your qualifications relate to our position?  
 What do you have to offer?  
 What are your own special or unique abilities?  
 What are your interests outside of work or school?  
 What new skills or capabilities have you developed over the past year?  
 How have you demonstrated initiative and willingness to work? What motivates you?  
 How would a co-worker, friend or boss describe you?  
 What qualities do you admire most in others?  
 How would you describe your own work style?  
 Are you at your best when working alone or in a group?  
 How do you handle conflict?  
 Why should I hire you?

## QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CAREER GOALS OR PLANS

Why did you decide to become a...?  
 What type of position are you interested in? Describe your ideal job.  
 What are your career objectives, both short and long range?  
 What would you like to be doing five or ten years from now?  
 What are your location preferences?  
 What do you expect from a job?  
 How will employment with us contribute to your career plans?  
 If the job is a total change from your previous employment, how does it fit into your career goals?  
 How do you define success? What personal characteristics will contribute to your success?  
 Can you tell me about a goal you set for yourself and how you went about reaching it?  
 Questions about School/Education  
 What classes did you like most in school? Least? Why?  
 What are your plans for continuing your education?  
 Why did you choose your major?  
 How does your education relate to this position? How has your education prepared you for this position?  
 What activities did you participate in at school?  
 What have you read recently in your field?  
 Why did you decide to attend the University of South Dakota?  
 What career-related skills do you possess as a result of your academic preparation?

## PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS

What were the biggest pressures on your last job? How did you handle them?  
 What have you learned from your past jobs?  
 What specific skills acquired or used in previous jobs relate to this position?  
 How often, and in what ways, did you communicate with your subordinates and supervisors?  
 How did your job description for your last job change while you held it?  
 How does your previous experience relate to this position?  
 Why did you leave your last job?  
 What did you like most/least about your last job?  
 Whom may we contact for references?  
 Tell me about the toughest boss you ever worked for.

## QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO THE COMPANY/JOB

Why do you want to work here?  
 What do you know about this organization?  
 What salary do you expect?  
 Why do you think you would like this type of position? Company?  
 What kind of boss do you like to work for?  
 How long do you intend to stay here?  
 What do you think determines a person's success in an organization?  
 What interests you about our product or service? How would you improve it?  
 What do you think would be your greatest contribution to our operation?  
 Can you travel overnight?





# ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES

Students have the opportunity to sign up for on-campus interviews with employers through the Coyote Careers system. In order to uphold a high standard of professionalism that coincides with our Code of Ethics, the University of South Dakota enforces the following policies regarding scheduled on-campus interviews:

## INTERVIEW CANCELLATION POLICY

Interviews need to be canceled at minimum, 48 hours before the scheduled interview. Failing to cancel more than 48 hours in advance will count as a missed interview. Refer to “No-Show Policy” below for details.

## NO-SHOW POLICY

### ***First missed interview***

If you miss an interview you will be asked to submit a written letter of apology (this can be in an email format) to the employer within seven days of the missed interview. A copy of this letter must be provided to the Career Service Center Manager in the Business School or the Employer Relations Coordinator in the Academic & Career Planning Center. If this is in email format, you must blind copy (BCC) the staff member, or forward the sent email for documentation.

*Failure to provide a written letter of apology will result in suspension of activity on your Coyote Careers account. Once the letter of apology is completed and sent to the employer, the suspension will be lifted.*

### ***Second missed interview***

Missing a scheduled interview for the second time will result in suspension of your on-campus interviewing privileges for the remainder of the academic year in which the interview took place.

You will need to provide a written letter of apology within seven days of the missed interview. A copy of this letter must be provided to the Career Service Center Manager in the Business School or the Employer Relations Coordinator in the Academic & Career Planning Center. If this is in email format, you must blind copy (BCC) the staff member, or forward the sent email for documentation.

*Failure to provide a written letter of apology will result in suspension of activity on your Coyote Careers account. Once the letter of apology is completed and sent to the employer, the suspension will be lifted.*

Exceptions to the above policies will be made for emergencies and other situations at the discretion of the Career Service Center Manager for the Business School and the Employer Relations Coordinator in the Academic & Career Planning Center. Regardless of circumstance, an apology letter will need to be provided to the employer when an interview is missed.

# QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK DURING AN INTERVIEW

At the conclusion of an interview, you will be given the opportunity to ask questions. This is your chance to learn more about the position, assess the fit of the organization, and demonstrate your interests. Listed below are examples of questions you may choose to ask. In addition, you may want to ask questions that are more specific to your field.

- What specific skills and experience would you ideally look for in the person filling this position?
- How would you describe a typical day in this job?
- What do you like most about working for XYZ Company?
- What is the career path for a person who is successful in this position?
- How many people have been employed in this position and where have they gone? What is the average length of stay in this position?
- How often are performance reviews given?
- What kind of training can a new hire in this position expect?
- To whom would I report? What is his or her management style?
- Can you tell me about the team I'll be working with?
- If I were extended an offer, how soon would you like me to start?
- What else can I tell you about my qualifications?
- When can I expect to hear from you? What is the timeline for the search?



# INTERVIEW TIPS

- Over 50 percent of the work of any job is learned on-the-job, so don't let job descriptions discourage you.
- Only 15 percent of the success of an interview is outside of your control.
- According to a recent survey of employers, the top five skills that recruiters are looking for in candidates are verbal communication skills, strong work ethic, teamwork skills, analytical skills, and initiative. Be sure to emphasize these skills during an interview.
- The most common reasons that strong candidates bomb interviews are:
  - › Not giving enough detail in answers or excluding critical details that are relevant for the job.
  - › Doing a poor job of answering the "why me" question. Why should they hire YOU over all of the other people who want the same job? Remember that the ideal candidate for the job is someone who has the key skills and can hit the ground running.
  - › Bad energy. Interviewees who have flat verbal delivery, talk too quickly, are nervous, lack warmth or are arrogant fail the "fit" test.
  - › Concentrating too much on what they want as opposed to what they have to offer the company.
  - › Inadequate research about the employer.
- First impressions are critical. A bad first impression can be extremely difficult to recover from.
  - › Show up to the interview 15 minutes early. If you aren't sure of the location, go there prior to your interview so you can locate it and determine how much time it will take to arrive.
  - › Before you get out of your car or get into the building, check to make sure you don't have any leftover food on your face or in your teeth, smeared makeup or messy hair.
  - › Smile at and greet everyone you meet.
  - › Shake hands with your interviewers. It should be firm, but not too hard.
  - › Take the lead of the interviewer and sit when he/she sits.
  - › If you view something in the office that you have in common, bring it up. It will help create a personal connection with the interviewer.
- During the interview, be careful not to interrupt the interviewer and listen to the entire question before answering.
- Remain positive throughout the interview. Your energy will have a large impact on the interviewer's impression of you.
- Avoid filler words such as like, um, uh and so. They are distracting and make you sound less prepared and professional.
- If you need to think about a question before you answer it, take a few moments to gather your thoughts. Silence is okay as it shows that you think before you speak.
- Do not ramble. Keep your answers clear and to the point. If you elaborate too much, the interviewer may perceive that you lack communication skills, or that you don't have an answer so you are talking to fill space.
- Eye contact is important! Lack of eye contact can be perceived as lack of confidence, lack of interest or lying.
- Engage with posture and watch your non-verbals. Sit upright with your feet on the floor. If you must cross your legs, cross at the ankles. Your hands should sit in your lap unless you are using them to talk. Don't play with hair or cross your arms over your chest. Don't use too many hand gestures and don't fidget.



# INTERVIEW FOLLOW UP

Writing thank you letters have seemed to be a lost art of business etiquette as many individuals overlook this matter of courtesy. So, when should you send a thank you note? There are several situations in which a thank you letter is appropriate:

1. After an employment interview.
2. When an individual assists you in your job search with a lead, with a network contact, or by speaking on your behalf to a prospective employer.
3. After an informational interview, company visit, or other career exploration activity such as a job fair.

Sending a thank you letter can set you apart from all the other applicants competing for a job or internship. To be effective, the thank you note should be sent prior to the employer making a hiring decision, so it is best to send a thank you note immediately after an interview or at least within 24 hours of the interview. Sending a thank you note will give you the opportunity to mention any important information you may have forgotten to discuss during the interview and/or allow the interviewer to remember who you are. It also allows you to explain, restate, or clear up any potential misunderstandings. In addition, a well written thank you note shows that you are a professional and gives you the ability to re-emphasize your qualifications, skills, accomplishments and organizational fit. A thank you letter should be no more than one page in length and follow the below outline/format.

## FIRST PARAGRAPH

The first paragraph should be used to thank the interviewer for taking the time to meet

with you. Remind him/her of the position for which you interviewed. Be sure to reiterate your interest in the job/company.

## SECOND PARAGRAPH

The second paragraph should include the reasoning as to why you are an excellent choice for the position. List specific skills or qualifications that relate to the job and your fit for the position. It is also good to mention something you learned during the interview or comment on the most important qualifications or skills discussed.

## THIRD PARAGRAPH/ FINAL PARAGRAPH

A third paragraph can be used to mention anything you may have forgotten to discuss during the interview. If you did not forget anything, this then would become your closing paragraph. In the closing paragraph, again reiterate your appreciation for being considered for the opportunity and for his/her time. Be sure to inform the interviewer that you are looking forward to hearing from him/her soon or if appropriate, close with a suggestion for a future follow up.

## SAMPLE FOLLOW UP LETTER

Charlie Coyote  
1234 Cherry Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
605-123-1234

Mr. John Doe  
Director, ABC Company 123 Main Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069

May 12, 2010

Dear Mr. Doe:

Thank you for the recent opportunity to meet and discuss your open position at ABC Company. My enthusiasm for the position and interest in working for ABC Company were greatly strengthened as a result of our interview. I remain confident that my qualifications are a good match for your needs.

During the interview, I especially enjoyed hearing about your strategic plan for the company and found myself sharing your vision. You need someone capable of initiating change and effectively communicating with members of the team, which is something I am able to perform. During my internship at XYZ Corporation, I worked closely with the management team to develop and improve company procedures. I then trained the staff on the new processes. I was commended by my supervisor on my ability to successfully communicate these changes to the team in a positive manner.

In addition to my qualifications and experience, I will bring to this position an excellent work ethic and critical thinking skills. With the countless demands on your time, I am sure you require people who can be trusted to carry out their responsibilities with minimal supervision.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. Please feel free to contact me if you need any additional information. I look forward to hearing from you about this position.

Sincerely,  
*Charlie Coyote*  
Charlie Coyote



# EVALUATING JOB OFFERS

Receiving a job offer can be exciting, but be sure not to let your emotions tempt you into accepting a position on the spot. Give yourself time to be certain this is the job for you. Even if the position is something that you really want, take at least a day to be absolutely certain.

When evaluating job offers, there are several aspects to consider:

- **Salary**—When evaluating salary, be sure you are being realistic. Salary is impacted by many things.
- **The Organization**—What is their reputation? Do you believe in what they do? What is the culture like? Do you feel as though you will fit in? Are there opportunities for professional development or continuing education? What sort of training program is offered? Will you have job security? Opportunities for advancement? How many hours per week will you be required to work?
- **The Location and Environment**—Will you have to relocate? What is the city like? Do you know anyone? What will the work environment be like? Will you be able to feel productive and creative in the environment? What is the physical space like? Will you have a long commute to work? How much interaction will you have with your colleagues/supervisor?
- **The Position**—What will your duties be? Will you enjoy them? How much responsibility will you have? Will you face challenges? Will you have the opportunity to expand your skill set?

Regardless of which position you select, don't ever renege on a job offer. Be sure the first time. Once the offer is accepted, notify any other employers with whom you are in discussion with and inform them that you are no longer a candidate. Cancel any upcoming interviews by courteously explaining that you have accepted another job offer.

## SAMPLE LETTER ACCEPTING AN OFFER

111 Main Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069

April 11, 2014

Ms. Jane Doe  
Director of Marketing  
ABC Company  
123 Pine Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701

Dear Ms. Doe:

I am happy to accept your offer to join the ABC Company's new product development department.

Thank you for your assistance with my questions about relocation to the Rapid City area; your help will make my transition a smooth one. As we discussed, I will report to your office on June 1, eager to contribute to the new product development team.

Sincerely,

*Charlie Coyote*  
Charlie Coyote

## SAMPLE LETTER REJECTING AN OFFER

111 Main Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069

April 11, 2014

Mr. Robert Smith  
Associate Director  
123 Corporation  
111 North Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701

Dear Mr. Smith

Thank you for your offer for the position of research assistant with the 123 Corporation. After much consideration, however, I have decided to accept a similar position at another firm. I believe this position will better fit my research interests and more closely align with my future goals.

I want to thank you again for the time you spent with me during my office visit last month. I appreciate your interest in me, and I enjoyed learning more about your organization.

Sincerely,

*Charlie Coyote*  
Charlie Coyote



# **Consider Graduate or Professional School**

# APPLICATION PROCESS

## Am I Ready?

The decision to attend graduate school will be dictated by your individual situation. Have you had an enriching undergraduate experience to feel confident about choosing your field of graduate interest? Have these experiences also resulted in feeling not only competitive in the admissions process but competent about pursuing graduate study? Do you have the motivation and commitment to engage in a course of study that will involve at least two years at the master's level to an average of 5-6 years (variable) at the Ph.D. level? If you are hesitant to respond, you may find that you would benefit more from working first to assess your career goals as well as to further develop your experiences. Simultaneously, you may consider some additional coursework to bridge your interests, especially if choosing a course of study different from your bachelor's degree or if you are concerned about the strength of your undergraduate record. However, if the answer to these questions is YES, then consider applying to graduate programs so you can start immediately after you complete your bachelor's degree.

## How to Get Started

Ideally, your focus on the graduate school application process should start at least one full year in advance of when you would expect to see yourself beginning the graduate program. To begin, you must identify your interests. Although you may be sure you want to continue your education, you may not know how your interests are defined by the various graduate programs. Advisors from the Academic & Career Planning Center are available to assist you with this process.

Once your interest is decided, you need to identify programs where you would like to apply. There are several online resources that make this easy. The Peterson's Guide to Graduate and Professional Programs contains information about each institution, including contact information. It can be found online at <http://www.petersons.com>.

The GRE search service is a computer based search service that matches prospective graduate students with participating graduate schools. This service is free and you may register by completing the registration form found on the GRE website at <http://www.ets.org/gre>.

Additional online resources are [www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com) and [www.princetonreview.com/grad-school](http://www.princetonreview.com/grad-school).

Watch for information each fall regarding USD's Career and Graduate School Fair. Representatives from graduate programs visit our campus to recruit students. This fair is a great opportunity for you to obtain first hand information on the schools of your choice.

It's also a good idea to consult with your faculty advisor and/or professors in your area of interest. Faculty may be able to provide suggestions about schools to consider as well as some important information about the reputations of the school or the quality of the faculty teaching there. Graduate students who are currently enrolled in programs are also a valuable source of information. Since they have recently gone through this process, they may be able to share their experiences with you.



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# APPLICATION PROCESS

Typically, graduate schools will evaluate you in five different areas: grade point average, test scores, letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, and experience. Each institution's departmental faculty decides on admission requirements for its prospective students. Therefore, you may find other factors taken into consideration (e.g. personal interviews, writing samples or portfolios).

## 1. GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

The GPA is a standard estimate of your aptitude to be academically successful in graduate school. GPA's are calculated in a number of ways: cumulative, last 60 semester credits earned, or by major. You will need to check with individual institutions to see how they handle GPA calculation.

## 2. TEST SCORES

Most graduate programs are going to require some sort of entrance exam. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is required by most universities in the United States. It is used not only for the purpose of admissions, but is sometimes also used (in conjunction with other criteria) to award fellowships, teaching assistantships and/or research assistantships. Other common exams that are required, depending on the type of program you are applying to are: Law School Admission Test (LSAT), Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), Dental Admission Test (DAT), and Optometry Admission Test (OAT). Acceptable scores on each of these exams will be determined by the individual program for which you are applying.

## 3. LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Letters of recommendation are very important in the application process. Typically you will need to contact three letter-writers. Depending on the requirements of the program to which you are applying, letters may come from faculty, internship supervisors, employers, and others who can confidently discuss your potential for graduate level work.

## 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The statement of purpose (sometimes referred to as the 'essay' or 'statement of professional goals') is your opportunity to state who you are, discuss experiences you have had in your field that have confirmed your interest in graduate school, and explain your professional goals. The statement is typically 2-3 pages (typed, double spaced) and should be an essay of the highest quality.

## 5. EXPERIENCE

Admissions committees are interested in knowing how much and what types of experience you have had in your field. The place to discuss your experience is in the statement of purpose. You might include internships, independent study, research experiences, applicable employment, summer internship programs, laboratory/field assignments, etc. Such opportunities demonstrate that you have the experiences and commitment necessary as you pursue your professional goals.



# TIMELINE FOR APPLYING

## Sophomore Year

*or as soon as possible*

- Think about your goals and whether or not Graduate School is right for you.
- Focus on earning the best possible GPA.
- Write your resume, and review your accomplishments. Are there areas you can improve (research, presentations, leadership, volunteerism, academic accomplishments?)
- Start researching graduate programs. Peterson's Guide (<http://www.petersons.com>), the GRE Search Service (<http://www.ets.org/gre>), Grad Schools.com ([www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com)), and the Princeton Review ([www.princetonreview.com/grad-school](http://www.princetonreview.com/grad-school)) are some online resources.
- Begin browsing through the websites of graduate programs of interest to you. See what research is being done at each school where you have an interest and what the professors have published.

## Junior Year

- Meet with faculty members in your department to discuss possible programs to consider.
- Identify which admissions test you may need to take (ie: GRE, GMAT, MCAT, LSAT, etc.). Take practice exams and prepare by purchasing and studying a practice book.

### SUMMER PRIOR TO SENIOR YEAR:

- Collect information from all schools that interest you. See what financial aid, scholarships, and graduate assistantships are offered.
- Review application deadlines for each program of interest.
- Determine the list of schools to which you will apply.

## Senior Year

### OCTOBER

- Take admission tests and request that your scores be sent to appropriate schools.
- Complete your personal statement and have it reviewed by a faculty member or advisor.
- Request letters of recommendation (attach a copy of your personal statement).
- Order transcripts from all post-secondary institutions.

### NOVEMBER (OR EARLIER)

- Complete application forms (do a draft first!).

### DECEMBER

- Make copies of all application pieces for your records. Mail applications (if not web-based) one month in advance of the application deadline (pay close attention to instructions).

### JANUARY

- Check with schools to verify that your letters of recommendation and transcripts have arrived to complete your application by the deadline

### FEBRUARY

- Contact schools about setting up campus visits (this could be done much earlier as well)

### APRIL

- Mail acceptance forms and deposits.
- Notify schools that you will not be attending after making your decision.
- Send thank you letters to the writers of your letters of recommendation. Inform your advisor of your decision.



# WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

The personal statement is your opportunity to sell yourself in the application process. It generally falls into one of two categories:

1. The general, comprehensive personal statement:  
This allows you maximum freedom in terms of content and is the type of statement often prepared for standard medical or law school application forms.
2. The response to very specific questions:  
Often business and graduate school applications ask specific questions that your statement should address. Some business school applications favor multiple essays, asking for responses to three or more questions.



## Things to consider before writing:

- What's special, unique, distinctive, and/or impressive about you or your life story?
- What details of your life (personal or family problems, history, people or events that have shaped you or influenced your goals) might help the committee better understand you or help set you apart from other applicants?
- When did you become interested in this field and what have you learned about it (and about yourself) that has further stimulated your interest and reinforced your conviction that you are well suited to this field? What insights have you gained?
- How have you learned about this field—through classes, readings, job shadows, seminars, work or other experiences, or conversations with those in the field?
- If you have worked a lot during your college years, what have you learned (leadership or managerial skills, for example) and how has that work contributed to your growth?
- What are your career goals?
- Are there any gaps or discrepancies in your academic record that you should explain?
- Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships in your life?
- What personal characteristics do you possess that would improve your prospects for success in the field? Is there a way to demonstrate or document that you have these characteristics?
- What skills (for example, leadership, communicative, analytical) do you possess?
- Why might you be a stronger candidate for graduate school (and more successful in the field) —than other applicants?

# PERSONAL STATEMENTS/ GENERAL ADVICE

## ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THAT ARE ASKED

If you are applying to several schools, you may find questions in each application that are somewhat similar. Do not use the same statement for all applications. It is important to answer each question being asked, and if slightly different answers are needed, you should write separate statements. In every case, be sure your answer fits the question being asked.

## TELL A STORY

Think in terms of showing or demonstrating through concrete experience. One of the worst things you can do is to bore the admissions committee. If your statement is fresh, lively, and different, you will be putting yourself ahead of the pack. If you distinguish yourself through your story, you will make yourself memorable.

## BE SPECIFIC

For example, do not state that you would make an excellent doctor unless you can back it up with specific reasons. Your desire to become a lawyer, engineer, or whatever should be logical, the result of specific experience that is described in your statement. Your application should emerge as the logical conclusion to your story.

## FIND AN ANGLE

If you are like most people, your life story lacks drama, so figuring out a way to make it interesting becomes the big challenge. Finding an angle or a “hook” is vital.

## CONCENTRATE ON YOUR OPENING PARAGRAPH

The lead or opening paragraph is generally the most important. It is here that you grab the reader’s attention or lose it. This paragraph becomes the framework for the rest of the statement.

## TELL WHAT YOU KNOW

The middle section of your essay might detail your interest and experience in your particular field, as well as some of your knowledge of the field. Be as specific as you can in relating what you know about the field and use the language professionals use in conveying this information. Refer to work experiences, research, classes, conversations with people in the field, books you have read, seminars, or any other source of specific information about the career. Explain why you are suited for it.

## DON’T INCLUDE SOME SUBJECTS

There are certain things best left out of personal statements. For example, references to experiences or accomplishments in high school or earlier are generally not persuasive because they are outdated. Do not mention potentially controversial subjects (e.g., controversial religious or political issues).

## DO SOME RESEARCH, IF NEEDED

If a school wants to know why you are applying to it rather than another school, do some research to find out what sets your choice apart from other universities or programs. If the school setting would provide an important geographical or cultural change for you, mention that.

## WRITE WELL AND CORRECTLY

Be meticulous. Type and proofread your essay very carefully. Adhere to stated word limits.

## AVOID CLICHÉS

Medical school applicants who write that they are good at science and want to help other people are not exactly expressing an original thought. Stay away from often-repeated or tired statements.

# PERSONAL STATEMENT

## Sample 1

As a double major in Anthropology and Psychology at the University of South Dakota, I have gained a strong background in both fields. My background is especially strong in physical anthropology, my primary field of interest. Physical anthropology consumes my life; I do not study it because I find it somewhat interesting but because I am devoted to it; I want to make it my life. In addition to maintaining a high GPA throughout my college career, and making the Dean's list several times, I have also worked hard as a supervisor at ABC Pharmacy for the past five years. Working my own way through college not only demonstrates my determination to gaining a high quality education and the seriousness with which I treat academics, but also attests to my leadership ability, maturity, and responsibility, both as a supervisor and as a student.

My primary goal in applying to your graduate program is to prepare myself for a career in forensic anthropology. Interested in furthering the current body of research and in improving techniques used in the identification of human remains, I am very committed to pursuing forensic anthropology and believe your graduate program in anthropology will provide me with an excellent foundation in the area of physical and forensic anthropology. With a Master's degree and Ph.D., I will be well prepared to lead a very promising career. While I have no doubt that the program will push me to my limits, I am confident that I can face the rigorous challenges posed by graduate study and thrive under the demanding environment that advanced studies entail.

From my transcripts, you will see that not only am I a well-balanced student, I actually thrive in rigorous, upper level courses. Armed with the confidence that I can excel at difficult courses, I believe I can achieve the highest level of success and satisfaction by taking the most demanding graduate program available.

In addition to my ability to excel in the classroom, I have demonstrated a proficiency in all aspects of conducting research. Research has become a fundamental part of my college career, and I hope it will become the primary component of my future. As a sophomore, I designed a research project entitled "Grooming and Affiliative Behavior in Three Species of Non-Human Primates" under the guidance of Dr. John Doe in the Anthropology Department at USD. My research proposal gained approval from the Institutional Research Committee at USD and at the Great Plains Zoo where the three species of non-human primates (Gibbons, Sakis, and Lemurs) included in my study are kept. In addition to writing a successful research proposal, I also wrote and received a small funds grant from the University of South Dakota in order to conduct my research. By being intimately involved in every aspect of research, from proposal and grant writing to data collection and analysis, I have learned what it takes to be a researcher, but more than that, I have learned how fulfilling and interesting research can be.

In the spring of 2015, I will be presenting my results at a poster presentation at the University of South Dakota, and am planning to eventually publish my findings. Not only has this experience shown me that I am capable of excelling in conducting research, but it has also allowed me to develop a love for the hands-on learning that is so crucial to successful research. In my final semester at USD, I will be participating in an ongoing research project concerning brain function and attention span under the direction of Dr. Charlie Coyote, a professor in the psychology department at USD. This project will undoubtedly further advance my academic skills and reinforce my passion for research.

Physical anthropology is more than just my primary area of education; it has also become my hobby and lifestyle. The questions posed and answered via the study of physical anthropology have fascinated me for a very long time and have stimulated me to ask and seek to answer further questions. With my mind set on the very specific goal of preparing myself as excellently as possible for a future in the field of forensic anthropology, I am fully confident that I will not only be able to fulfill my dream, but to contribute substantially to your graduate program as well.

# PERSONAL STATEMENT

## Sample 2

“Go face the force of the wind, and fight the slash of the rain, the palm of your hands will thicken, the skin of your cheeks will tan, but you will walk like a man.” This is the motto that has always endowed me with important inspirations, whether on the occasion when I led my college basketball team to win the championship by scoring the winning goal minutes before the referee blew his whistle at the end of the match, or on hundreds of occasions when I compiled computer programs to realize my mathematical conceptualizations. This remark has become a constant source of motivating force that has infused into me the energy to forge ahead relentlessly. This determination is reinforced by the words uttered by Maximus, the protagonist in the Hollywood movie *Gladiator*, on his horse before the battle: “What we accomplish today will resound with rotundity in the eternal future.”

I cultivated an intense interest in mathematics as early as elementary school. Sometimes termed as the “gymnastics of logical thinking,” mathematics naturally became my central focus of study as I achieved consistently exceptional scores in every final-term examination, earning the nickname of “mathematics prodigy.” At middle school, I represented my school to participate in the national Mathematics Olympics Competition to win a second-class award. As soon as I had access to a computer in middle school, I became enchanted with the computer programs that possessed equal logical beauty as the mathematics vocabulary and language. Consequently, when I entered the University of South Dakota where I studied in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, I felt as if plunging into a vast reservoir of knowledge that allowed me to absorb precious learning to my heart’s content. Not satiated by the theories of mathematics taught in class, I attended many courses in computer theories and application as my subsidiary program, courses that included Data Structure, Operation Systems, Assembler Language like Programming with C Language, Multimedia & Internet Technology, and Mathematical Analysis. Those courses helped to develop my enthrallment with abstract symbols, figures, vocabulary and language.

Although mathematics as a specialized subject is a purely theoretical discipline, I paid much attention to the improvement of my ability to apply mathematics to the solution of practical problems. In my spare time, I liked to study mathematical models and algorithms, trying my hands at their realization by compiling some computer programs. Two classmates and I formed a mathematical model construction team and we researched the subject

of the Economic Growth Model, which focused on the modeling of economic growth by applying differential equations of mathematics. My sound ability in programming was fully manifested in compiling codes. My involvement in this undertaking not only deepened my understanding of mathematics, but also perfected my computer techniques. This project was awarded a second place prize at a Mathematical Modeling Competition among the colleges and universities in the Midwest.

Another thing that I like to do in my spare time is learning both hardware and software computer skills. So far, I have passed the Grade III Computer Test and Intermediate Level Programmer Test, achieving qualification certificates from large internationally-established software and hardware companies such as MICROSOFT, CISCO, SUN, and GIGABYTE. During the two years in which I acted as chairman of the Computer Association of our university’s Student Union, I organized several major campus events in which, by exercising my special talents in computer technology, I launched computer training programs to students of non-computer majors. Within a short period of time, the association developed into one of the largest student organizations on campus and under my leadership more than 400 members devoted themselves to honing their computer skills. Besides enhancing my organizational capability and my leadership, I was awarded the honor of the Outstanding Student Organization Leader, an honor which made me very proud of myself.

I have also attended many off-campus seminars and press conferences at product and technology promotions, which prompted my interest in multimedia and Internet technologies. I am fascinated by the field of data compression and decompression by means of optimized algorithms, a field of research in which lies the ultimate solution to the obstacle in data transmission. I am soberly aware that I am bound to encounter a series of challenges and difficulties in my future academic pursuit abroad. I have to learn a great variety of theories and knowledge in my chosen field on one hand and to face fierce competitions on the other. It is conceivable that I will come under significant psychological pressure. But I am equally convinced that, by availing myself of the excellent intellectual environment and lab facilities of your esteemed university and closely following and grasping the most sophisticated computer technology, I will be able to achieve constant improvement of my abilities on both the theoretical and practical levels. Like Maximus, I have the implicit faith that the efforts that I undertake today will “resound” with lasting echoes in my future.

# GRADUATE PROGRAM INTERVIEWS

Not all graduate programs interview, but be prepared for the possibility, especially if you're applying for a slot in a particularly competitive program or field. The purpose of the interview is to allow the admissions committee to meet you in person and get to know you better. They want to establish that you are mature, have strong interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation to succeed. They will be interested in whether you can manage stress well and think on your feet. A candidate who appears to be a good match for a program on paper may not be such a great fit in person. The interview is also your chance to evaluate the program. During the interview, you'll also have an opportunity to see the campus and meet faculty and students to determine if the program is a good fit for you.

## What to Expect

The format of the interview is going to depend on the program. Some programs will use in-person one-on-one or panel interviews with faculty. Others may utilize group interviews with multiple candidates. The interview may be a 30-minute sit down, or it could involve several days of activities.

During an interview, you will want to demonstrate your listening skills without monopolizing the conversation. Don't expect the interviewer to remember anything in your file, so be prepared to discuss in depth your experiences, strengths and professional goals.

## How to Prepare

- Do your research. Learn as much as you can about the program and college. Be familiar with the research interests of the faculty.
- Review your interests, goals, and qualifications. Be prepared to sell yourself and discuss why you are a good match for the program. What do you have to offer? What can you contribute to their graduate program and research? Why should they accept you? What skills do you bring that will help a professor advance in his or her research?
- Anticipate questions that you might be asked and rehearse your answers.
- Prepare questions to ask.

## During the Interview

- Remember your goals during your interview.
- Be sure to convey your interest, motivation and professionalism.
- Gather the information you need to determine if the program is a good fit for you.
- If you have the opportunity to meet with students in the program, ask questions to garner what they really think about their advisors and the program. Ask what they like best/least about the program.
- Don't underestimate the potential influence of current graduate students. Present your best side because current graduate students may be in a position to help or hurt your application.
- Some interviews include social events like parties. Don't drink too much (even if others do). Remember that even though it seems like a party, it's an interview. Assume that you're being evaluated at all times.



# SAMPLE GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSION QUESTIONS

01. Why do you want to be a \_\_\_\_\_?
02. What do you do in your spare time?
03. What stimulated your interest in this field?
04. If your best friends were asked to describe you, what would they say?
05. What do you intend to gain from an education in this field?
06. What can you contribute to this field?
07. What ethical standards will you promote in this field?
08. What do you think about (current hot topic in field)?
09. Why do you think so many people want to go into this field?
10. There are 1,000 applicants as qualified as you. Why should we pick you?
11. What communication skills are important for someone in this field?
12. What steps have you taken to acquaint yourself with what a \_\_\_\_\_ does?
13. What do you think is the most pressing issue in this field today?
14. This program is known for its rigor. How will you handle the stress?
15. What will you do if you don't get into this school?
16. What are your positive qualities and what are your shortcomings?
17. What is your relationship with your family?
18. How do you think your role as a \_\_\_\_\_ fits in with your role as a member of the community?
19. What are your weaknesses?
20. What are the best and worst things that have ever happened to you?
21. What do you see yourself doing in 10-15 years from now?
22. Why do you think this will be a rewarding field to enter?
23. What aspects of your life's experiences do you think make you a good candidate for this program?
24. What life experiences have you had that have made you a better person?
25. What accomplishments are you most proud of?
26. What observation in this field of work has had the most influence on your decision to enter the field?
27. Describe some of your most challenging and enjoyable observations?
28. With what population do you anticipate wanting to work?
29. What have you done to assure yourself that this field is a good fit for you?
30. How well do you work in groups? Can you give an example of a time when you took charge of a group?
31. How would you handle a non-compliant patient or a difficult client?
32. When is a time when you have had a lot on your plate and how did you handle it?
33. What is your definition of a professional?
34. What is the most difficult decision you've had to make and how did you arrive at your decision?
35. Describe a time when you had to overcome a challenge?
36. When did you have to do something you did not agree with?
37. Can you explain why some of your prerequisite grades are a bit lower than others?
38. What will you do if you are not admitted to this program?



# **Prepare for Life After Graduation**

# SALARY EXPECTATIONS AND BENEFITS

Salary is influenced by many different factors, including the current economy, the industry, type of employer, geographic region as well as your specific education, experience, and skill set. There are numerous resources available to help you research salaries. Keep in mind that your salary is not merely a dollar amount. Your salary will include a benefits package as well. You should also consider future earnings potential.

## Salary Resources

The following resources can assist you to evaluate salary information:

- Bureau of Labor Statistics  
<http://www.bls.gov/bls/wages.htm>  
Extensive information on national, regional, and state salary information.
- Salary Expert  
<http://www.salaryexpert.com>  
Basic salary reports for free. You can also get cost of living reports.
- Salary.com  
<http://www.salary.com>  
Salary wizards, benefits wizard, and cost of living analysis. Site also includes articles on topics such as salary negotiation and how to ask for a raise

## What are benefits?

Benefits are a form of compensation package over and above your salary. Some common benefits are:

- Paid time off for sick days, vacation days, or personal leave
- Health insurance
- Paid prescriptions
- Life insurance
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance
- Disability insurance
- Retirement benefits (401K plan or a pension)
- Flexible spending accounts
- Some employers may even offer relocation assistance, legal assistance, counseling services, childcare benefits, or employee discounts.

# THE ART OF NEGOTIATION

Now that you've been offered the job, the last step is to negotiate the salary and other benefits. Your goal is to determine what you are worth to this employer in this specific position at this point and time. You need to be negotiating around the current market. To successfully negotiate a salary that you and the employer are both comfortable with, follow these steps.

## Step 1

### PREPARE YOUR NUMBERS

Know what your bottom line is. Ask yourself, "if they can only pay me \$\_\_\_\_\_, would I still take the job?"

## Step 2

### KNOW THE MARKET

Know what other employers pay for someone with your qualifications for comparable work, and be realistic. There are numerous online resources that will give you information on salaries for various careers. This will give you your "target" or "desired number"—the high end of the range that you would consider.

Research market salaries for the geographic area in which you are searching, as well as for the industry, type of position, and level of experience.

## Step 3

### CONSIDER OTHER BENEFITS

Are there other benefits that are important to you which may be part of the compensation package (ie: vacation, insurance, retirement account contributions, holiday pay, etc.)?

## Step 4

### CONFRONT YOUR FEARS

It is normal to be nervous about the aspect of negotiating a salary. Most individuals are worried they will lose an offer, or that they will negotiate poorly and be taken advantage of. These concerns are normal; however, you can overcome your fears by being prepared. You want to be paid fairly so you enjoy your work and feel valued. The employer wants to pay what they can afford to best manage the economics of the business, but also pay employees fairly so morale is high and their reputation is good in the marketplace.

## Step 5

### MAKE SURE YOU ARE IN THE RIGHT POSITION TO DISCUSS SALARY

Avoid discussing salary until you have been offered the position. If asked during an interview about your salary requirements, you can say something like, "I'd really like to hear more about the opportunity before we discuss salary" or "Is there an established salary range for this position?" If they insist, give a range, established from your research.

## Step 6

### BE ENTHUSIASTIC, BUT NOT HASTY

Show your appreciation for the job offer, but don't be afraid to ask for a day or two to consider the offer.

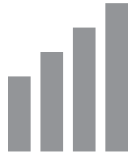
## Step 7

### IF YOU CHOOSE TO NEGOTIATE, PREPARE YOUR COUNTER OFFER AND BE NICE ABOUT IT.

Have a response prepared that highlights the skills and contributions you will be bringing to the organization, and discuss your research findings. "I believe a salary of \$\_\_\_\_\_, along with your generous benefits package is more in line with the experience and skills that I bring to this position"

Practice delivering your counteroffer, just as you would practice interviewing.

# YOUR TRANSITION FROM BACKPACK TO BRIEFCASE



## Job Success Factors

A successful career requires effective job performance, and certain traits are associated with high performance employees:

- Having a positive attitude
- Demonstrating the ability to work well with the team
- Fitting in with co-workers and the culture of the organization
- Showing initiative and follow through
- Accepting criticism and guidance
- Continually developing new skills and knowledge and keeping current in the field
- Using effective problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Exhibiting professionalism



## Email Etiquette

Your friends may get a kick out of your smiley faces and may have no trouble understanding your shorthand (LOL) but when you get to the workplace, those things must change.

- Keep your emails brief and to the point. Use bullets.
- No crazy fonts. Use something conservative like Times New Roman.
- DON'T USE ALL CAPS and don't overuse punctuation!!!
- Proofread, proofread, proofread
- Use "Reply All" sparingly.
- Do not use your work email for personal reasons and stay off of your personal email (and your Facebook and Twitter) while at work.

## 20 Tips for Getting Promoted

- |                                |   |  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 01. Arrive early               | 08. Don't be afraid to make decisions         | 14. Respect organizational norms             |
| 02. Dress appropriately        | 09. Give credit to coworkers when appropriate | 15. Don't be a clock watcher                 |
| 03. Find a mentor              | 10. Accept responsibility for mistakes        | 16. Keep personal business out of the office |
| 04. Help out coworkers         | 11. Ask for feedback on performance           | 17. Don't gossip                             |
| 05. Take on extra duties       | 12. Know what is expected of you              | 18. Set high goals                           |
| 06. Complete tasks on time     | 13. Act professionally                        | 19. Be a pleasure to work with               |
| 07. Stay current in your field |   | 20. Minimize complaining                     |



# PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE

You may have the academic knowledge and skills to have been offered the job, but do you have the professional etiquette skills to be successful in the position? Not knowing proper etiquette could damage your image and jeopardize personal and business relationships.

## MEETING AND GREETING

- Making a good first impression is critical. That begins with a good handshake and a smile. A firm handshake indicates that you are confident and assertive. A limp handshake sends the message that you are not interested or lack confidence. A handshake that is too firm may demonstrate that you are aggressive or controlling.
- In addition to a firm handshake, be sure to use good eye contact when meeting people, and smile. Always rise when introducing or being introduced to someone.

## DINING

- Wait to sit until the host/hostess sits or indicates where he/she would like you to sit.
- Place your napkin in your lap. You will place it beside your plate when you are finished eating.
- Don't order anything that is too messy or difficult to talk while eating.
- After you have decided what you will order, close your menu. That will signal to the server that you are ready to order.

## EATING

- Don't begin eating until everyone at the table has been served.
- Use good posture, sitting up straight.
- Keep your elbows off of the table.
- Bring food to your mouth, not your mouth to the plate.
- Try to eat at the same pace as everyone else.
- Silverware—start with the implement farthest from the plate and work inward (ie: the fork farthest from your plate is your salad fork). A dessert fork/spoon may be placed above your plate.
- Drink from the glass to the right of your plate. Your bread plate will be to the left.
- Season food only after you have tried it.
- Pass all items to the right. If an item has a handle, pass with the handle facing the individual.
- Don't chew with your mouth open.

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